UNDER MACARTHUR IN LUZON

OLD GLORY SERIES

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Old Glory Series

UNDER MACARTHUR IN LUZON

OR

LAST BATTLES IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY

EDWARD STRATEMEYER

AUTHOR OF "ON TO PEKIN," "BETWEEN BOER AND BRITON"
"OLD GLORY SERIES," "SHIP AND SHORE SERIES"
"BOUND TO SUCCEED SERIES," ETC.

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A. B. SHUTE

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Under MacArthur in Luzon.

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PREFACE

"UNDER MACARTHUR IN LUZON" is a complete story in itself, but forms the sixth and last volume of the "Old Glory Series," a line of tales depicting adventures in our army and navy during the war with Spain and the rebellion in the Philippine Islands.

The principal characters of these stories are the Russell brothers, Larry, Walter, and Ben. In the first volume were related the adventures of Larry while serving "Under Dewey at Manila," in the second Ben came forward as "A Young Volunteer in Cuba," while in the third Walter showed what true American pluck could accomplish while "Fighting in Cuban Waters." The scene then shifted back to Manila, and in the fourth and fifth volumes of the series we followed both Larry and Ben while serving "Under Otis in the Philippines" and during General Lawton's daring "Campaign of the Jungle."

In the present tale the reader is asked to follow the further fortunes of all the brothers, first, during another campaign under General Lawton in the vicinity of the Laguna de Bay, and then during a hard and well-fought campaign under General Arthur MacArthur in the northern territory of Luzon, during which, by the efforts of the general named, acting in concert with Generals Lawton and Wheaton, Aguinaldo and his army were driven far into the mountain region and all but hopelessly scattered. This was at a time when Walter had unexpectedly become a prisoner of the savage Negritos of northern Luzon, and what the young sailor saw and heard will, it is hoped, prove of interest to those who wish to learn more concerning the Filipino view of the present sad state of affairs in the islands.

It may be that some, in reading the pages which follow, will feel inclined to think that Ben Russell was altogether too smart for his age, and that his promotion, first to the rank of a captain of volunteers and lastly to that of a major, was altogether too rapid. If so, let them remember that the very general he served under became, during the Civil War, a lieutenant at seventeen, and commanded a

leading fighting regiment at nineteen years of age. Young America is full of pluck and daring, and never comes to the front more conspicuously than when fighting for the honor of Old Glory.

In bringing this Series to a close the author cannot refrain from thanking the many critics who have commended his former works. They have been more than kind, and for this he is profoundly grateful. He has tried to make the present volume as interesting as possible, and trusts that the boys and young men for whom it was written will find its perusal full of combined pleasure and profit.

EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

NEWARK, N. J.,
Washington's Birthday, 1901.

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UNDER MacARTHUR IN LUZON

CHAPTER I

SOMETHING ABOUT THE RUSSELL BOYS

"CAPTAIN RUSSELL, if I know anything about it, this is dangerous ground upon which we are treading."

"I fully agree with you, Lieutenant Gilmore. But to capture Aguinaldo, or any of his staff, is no easy task, and we have got to take some risks."

"I don't believe we shall ever capture Aguinaldo, captain. Our boys have tried it a hundred times, and he's like the flea in the old story, — when you put your hand on him he wasn't there."

"Well, if we can't capture him, we'll capture all we can of his staff and his so-called cabinet, and likewise his soldiers, and then he'll be very much like a king without a crown or a kingdom, lieutenant."

"I don't believe in pushing too far into the mountains after these fellows," went on Lieutenant Gilmore, earnestly. "Our force isn't large enough for the work."

"Are you growing afraid?"

"Not exactly, but I don't want to see the first battalion, and especially Company D, pounced upon and wiped out by Filipino sharpshooters. Major Morris told me he had heard the rebels had a fine body of good shots in this vicinity — got the news direct from General Lawton."

"Doubtless Aguinaldo believes in keeping the very best of his soldiers close by him. If he would only listen to reason and throw down his arms —" Captain Ben Russell broke off short and came to a sudden halt. "What's that?"

"What's what?"

"Didn't you see that movement among the bushes on the right of the trail? It looked — there it goes again. Get behind the trees, quick!"

As he spoke Captain Russell dropped down, dragging his fellow-officer with him, and then both crawled to the shelter of the nearest trees lining the road upon which they had been travelling. The movement came none too soon; for while they

were yet seeking shelter a report rang out on the misty morning air, and a bullet clipped through the brushwood close beside them.

"Wasn't that a close shave?" gasped Lieutenant Gilmore, when he felt safe to speak. "What did I tell you, captain?"

Captain Ben Russell did not reply immediately, for the reason that his whole attention was directed to the turn in the road from whence the shot had proceeded. He half expected more shots to follow, but in this he was disappointed.

"I believe I saw the glint of that rascal's rifle barrel," he observed slowly. "But I can't locate the exact spot now."

"What had we best do — fall back and report?"

"That depends. I should like to know if that fellow is alone."

"It's not likely — they always travel in batches of half a dozen or more — you know that as well as I."

"Our command could easily round up half a dozen." The young captain of Company D paused in thought. "I have half a mind to scout around a little and size up the situation before we go back."

"But the danger —"

"You can remain behind, lieutenant, if you wish."

"No; if you go ahead, I'll go too. But we have got to be careful. What do you propose?"

"Do you see that line of brushwood on our left, running up among the rocks?"

"Yes."

"I propose we crawl along the bushes on the other side until we get to the first of the rocks. Then, if we don't see anything, we can leap over the rocks and continue our scouting by coming up behind the spot from which the shot was sent."

"All right, captain."

"Don't make any noise, and don't speak unless it is absolutely necessary," concluded Captain Russell, and then the pair moved off as silently as shadows through the semi-gloom of the wet June morning.

It was a dangerous task which had been undertaken, and Captain Ben Russell of Company D, Colonel Darcy's regiment of volunteers, stationed in the island of Luzon, was well aware of that fact. The Filipino insurgents were growing more desperate every day, and their sharpshooters were taking greater risks than ever, in their endeavors

to bring down the *Americanos* at long range, especially the officers.

It was the middle of the year 1899, and Captain Ben Russell's command had returned to Manila, accompanied by a number of their wounded, after taking active part in an expedition under General Lawton to San Isidro, a perilous advance of a hundred and fifty miles through a hostile country, which lasted twenty days and brought on twenty-two battles. How gallantly the young captain conducted himself through this expedition, and through others, has already been related in previous volumes of this series entitled respectively, "Under Otis in the Philippines" and "The Campaign of the Jungle."

The captain was one of three brothers, he being the eldest, with Walter coming next, and light-hearted Larry the youngest. The home of the three was in Buffalo, New York, where they lived with their uncle, Job Dowling, who was now nominally their guardian. At one time Job Dowling had been very dictatorial and mean, and this had caused the three brothers to run away from home, Ben trying his fortunes in New York City, Walter making his way to Boston, and Larry drifting to San

Francisco. At San Francisco Larry had shipped as a foremast hand, first for Honolulu and then for Hong Kong, and on this latter voyage he had been wrecked with his intimate Yankee friend, Luke Striker, only to be picked up later by the Asiatic Squadron under Commodore (later Admiral) Dewey, just as the latter was sailing for the Philippines to engage the Spanish fleet under Admiral Montojo. How the greatest naval battle of modern times was successfully fought by Uncle Sam's jackies, and what part Larry and his friend Luke played in the drama, will be found set down in all its glorious details in "Under Dewey at Manila." After this battle Larry returned home, thinking the war in Philippine waters at an end, but when fresh troubles came in the shape of the Filipino rebellion he hastened to rejoin his ship the *Olympia*, and, later on, left that vessel to join the volunteer army, along with Luke Striker. But both had been wounded, and they were among those taken to the hospital at Manila.

Walter Russell was not naturally a sailor like Larry, but in Boston he had fallen in with a naval veteran of the Civil War, and this old gunner had so fired the youth's patriotic ambition that Walter

had enlisted in the navy at the Charlestown Navy Yard, to serve, later on, under Commodore Schley on the *Brooklyn*, at the destruction of Admiral Cervera's fleet in Santiago harbor, the particulars of which I have given in "Fighting in Cuban Waters." After this thrilling contest Walter had returned home to rejoin his brothers, and had aided them in bringing Job Dowling "to terms," as the three expressed it. Later still Walter had rejoined his ship for a cruise to Jamaica and other points. but this was now over, and at present he was on his way to the Philippines, with his chum, Si Doring, to join one of the ships stationed at Luzon, His remarkable cruise, with its queer ending, will be related in some of the chapters which follow.

It can truly be said that Ben Russell was a born soldier. Immediately upon the breaking out of the war he had joined the volunteers, and after being in camp on Long Island and at Tampa, Florida, he had been transported to Cuba, there to participate in the various engagements leading up to that of San Juan Hill, and to the downfall of Santiago. With him went his warm-hearted Southern chum, Gilbert Pennington, and the various adventures of the pair are set forth in detail

in "A Young Volunteer in Cuba." Gilbert belonged to Roosevelt's Rough Riders, but at the conclusion of the war with Spain, he left that organization now so famous in history and reënlisted with Ben for service in the island of Luzon. Gilbert had become first lieutenant of Company B of Colonel Darcy's regiment, and had also served under General Lawton. While advancing to answer a flag of truce shown by the Filipinos some treacherous rebel had shot him in the shoulder, inflicting a painful although not a dangerous wound; and he was now in the hospital with Larry, although he hoped to be out again in a few days.

Although Ben Russell had come to the Philippines solely to do his duty as a soldier, his adventures had not all been of a warlike nature. The Russell fortune, amounting to between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand dollars, had been invested by Job Dowling in the Hearthstone Saving Institution of Buffalo, of which one Braxton Bogg had been cashier. This Bogg had absconded, taking with him over a hundred thousand dollars belonging to the bank, which action practically wrecked the institution. By accident Ben had

fallen in with Braxton Bogg at Manila, and after missing his man several times, had succeeded in having him arrested. When in prison Bogg had confessed that he had turned the stolen funds over to a Spaniard named Benedicto Lupez, who had recently joined the insurgent army. It was no light task to follow up this Lupez, but it was finally accomplished at the fall of San Isidro, and from him was taken a leather bag containing fifty thousand dollars in gold. At first Lupez refused to talk, but at last confessed that just previous to the fall of the city he had divided the booty with his brother José, who had immediately left for parts unknown. It was afterward learned by Ben that this José Lupez was a very eccentric old Spaniard, and that he had paid Aguinaldo five thousand dollars for a general's commission in the Filipino army. What he had done with the remaining forty-five thousand dollars was known only to the newly titled General Lupez himself.

"We ought to try to get hold of that General Lupez," Larry was wont to say, as he lay sick in the hospital at Manila. "Unless the money is recovered, the Hearthstone Saving Institution won't be able to pay more than fifty cents on the dollar,

and that will mean a loss to us of eight or ten thousand dollars."

"I'll certainly do what I can," had been Ben Russell's reply. "But you know how the rebels are scattered now, and this Lupez will probably take warning by his brother's fate and give us a wide berth." Nevertheless, although he thought the chances of meeting this rascal slim, the young captain was on the constant lookout for him, and ready to bring him in, dead or alive, at the first opportunity that offered.

CHAPTER II

LIEUTENANT GILMORE HAS A FALL

As said before, the morning was a misty one, and there was every indication that a heavy downfall of rain was not far distant. The rainy season of the islands was at hand, and already the streams were much swollen and the trails "soppy" with the downfall of several days past. The bushes hung low with pearls of dew, and the young captain and his companion had not crawled far before they found their outer garments soaked with moisture. But to this they paid scant attention, for both had been wet many times before and their various campaigns had thoroughly toughened them.

On returning to Manila the members of Colonel Darcy's regiment had expected to remain there for some time. But in less than forty-eight hours the first battalion, under the command of Ben Russell's old friend, Major Morris, had been again ordered to the front, this time in the direction of the waterworks

on the east of the city. Only a few months before, General Lawton had marched as far east as Santa Cruz on the Laguna de Bay and scattered the insurgents in all directions; but there had not been enough American troops at hand to garrison the towns taken, and now the rebels were coming back in greater numbers than ever, so that they threatened not alone the city's waterworks, but the very outskirts of Manila itself. The rebels in this territory were now under General Pio del Pilar, one of the shrewdest of Aguinaldo's followers and one who was as brave as any in the rebel ranks.

The advance of the first battalion had been ordered for four o'clock that morning, and by five the four companies found themselves about half a mile beyond the regular American outposts which General Otis had established. More troops were following, and presently Major Morris had called a halt on the road at a point where several trails led up from the lake. Then the major had come to Ben and asked him to go forward and reconnoitre, and the young captain had done so, taking his lieutenant with him, upon Gilmore's earnest request. Gilmore had recently been appointed first lieutenant, and was anxious to distinguish himself, although equally anxious, as can

be surmised from his conversation, to keep himself from being shot.

Without a word, and with as little noise as possible, the young captain and his companion continued to crawl through the bushes until the rocks Ben had mentioned loomed up before them. Their ears were on the alert, but not a sound reached them.

Looking toward the rocks, Ben made out a narrow opening and pointed thither with his hand. Both approached it with caution, each with his pistol cocked and held out for instant use. But, so far as they could see, there was no enemy near the opening, and they passed through without molestation. Beyond the rocks was more brushwood, leading to a typical Philippine jungle.

The young captain had managed to retain his coolness, but it was plain to be seen that his lieutenant was growing more uneasy every minute. The silence was oppressive, if not suggestive, and Gilmore drew a long breath.

"Do you really think it's advisable to go ahead, captain?" he could not help but whisper.

"As I said before, you can go back if you wish," was the low answer. "I am going ahead and find out what I can for the major."

"But those rascals may be surrounding us on the quiet."

"Possibly, but, as I said before, we must take some risks. War isn't all fun and glory, and you ought to know it by this time."

"Do you see anything at all suspicious?"

"I do not."

"What do you suppose has become of that sharpshooter?"

"I hardly think he was a sharpshooter, his aim was so bad. More than likely he was some common soldier, who took to his heels as soon as he pulled trigger."

At these words the lieutenant breathed a bit easier, and the forward movement of the pair continued. Crossing a small stream, they gained the edge of the jungle and then moved in a semicircle to the left. A hundred feet were thus covered when Gilmore suddenly clutched Ben's arm.

"Stop! I saw somebody moving along the trees!" he whispered excitedly.

"Where?"

"Over yonder." And the lieutenant pointed with his pistol.

"Was it a rebel?"

"I couldn't make out exactly, it's so dark. But it was a man, and he had either a gun or a long club in his hands."

"Which way was he moving?"

"The same way that we are."

No more was said, but both dropped down, so that the bush growing under the tall trees might conceal them. It was dark in the jungle, but as they were nearest to the light, the young captain felt that so far as seeing was concerned, the enemy had the advantage of them.

More rocks had to be crossed, and Gilmore was stepping on these when one foot slipped and he came down heavily on his back. He uttered a sharp cry of pain, then rolled over on his side and slid into some tall grass at the foot of the rocks.

"Are you much hurt?" demanded Ben, anxiously.

"Oh, my back!" was the answer, with a long-drawn groan. "I struck my spine right on a sharp edge."

"Can you walk?"

"I — I'm afraid not, captain. What a fool I was to let myself slip! I wish we were out of this!" And Gilmore gave another groan.

"Try standing up," whispered the young captain,

sympathetically, and took hold of his companion's hand to assist him. Gilmore did try, but his pain was evidently intense, for with a shiver from head to foot he sank down again.

"I — can't make it, captain! Oh, what shall we do now?" and the speaker's face grew white.

"We'll do the best we can," returned Ben, trying to be cheerful, although he realized the gravity of the situation. It was hard enough for a man to take care of himself, let alone taking care of an injured comrade.

While speaking Ben had his eyes trained on the jungle behind him, and now, at a great distance, he saw a Filipino soldier sneaking along under the trees. The soldier was followed by three others, and the four disappeared almost as swiftly as they had appeared.

"You saw something?" queried Gilmore, watching Ben's face closely.

"Yes, four rebels, moving to the left."

"And armed?"

"Yes. They — there go some more! Six, seven, eight, nine!"

"It's just as I guessed — the jungle is full of them. Captain, we'll never get back alive!"

"Oh, don't give up yet, Gilmore."

"But I can't walk. What am I to do?"

"I'll carry you."

The lieutenant shook his head slowly. Then he essayed again to rise, only to fall back once more with a cry of pain.

Ben gazed around them, and at a short distance made out a hollow in the brushwood. "Come, you can hide there for the present," he said, "while I move around and try to find some safe way of getting back with you." Going ahead and leaving his companion to his fate was, to him, out of the question.

With as much care as a mother would use in handling her babe, the young captain bent over his lieutenant and raised him up. The motion gave Gilmore more pain, and the beads of perspiration stood out on the fellow's forehead. "It's awful! Oh!" he gasped. And he continued to groan as Ben advanced to the hollow.

"Now keep as quiet as you can," said Ben, as he laid the hurt one on the grass. "I am pretty sure we can get back all right if we watch our chances. It's going to rain, and a heavy shower will help us a good deal."

"Don't — don't leave me, captain!"

"I won't go far. I just want to reconnoitre a bit."

Ben felt that he had now a double responsibility upon his shoulders, and he did not leave the brushwood until he was certain none of the enemy were close at hand. Then, with pistol still drawn, he advanced toward the rocks over which they had made their way but a short while before.

On the other side of the rocks was a clump of three trees, with wide-spreading branches, some of which had bent down and reëntered the ground at a distance of several yards from the trunks. The trees were thickly interlaced with tropical vines, forming an ideal hiding-place for man or beast.

As the young captain stood near the rocks, he detected a movement in one of the trees. Then a low voice spoke up, in the Tagalog dialect.

"Do you see anything of the *Americanos*, now, Bambo?"

"I can see nothing — the mist is so thick," was the growling answer, in the same tongue.

"I feel sure the unclean ones came this way."

"Then where are they, Riva?"

"That we must find out. I will descend, while you can remain here on guard."

"As you will," grumbled he called Bambo. "But take heed that the unclean ones do not shoot you in the back."

The talking came to an end, and presently Ben saw the native named Riva letting himself down to the ground by means of the rope-like vines. He had a rifle slung over his shoulder and looked exactly what he was, a Filipino sharpshooter.

The young captain during his campaigns in Luzon had picked up a smattering of the Tagalog tongue, and while he did not comprehend all that was said, he understood enough to realize that the pair in the tree had been on guard and that they had seen both himself and Gilmore. Neither could be the man who had fired at them from the brush, and why they had not tried to bring down the Americans on sight was a mystery.

"They must be wanting to capture us alive," thought the young captain. "Perhaps their general is hungry for military imformation. Well, they shan't get anything out of me, dead or alive."

It would have been an easy matter for the young officer to have killed the Tagal on the spot, but Ben was averse to taking the life of even an enemy in cold blood; and besides, he was afraid that a shot

might cause a general alarm, to his own disadvantage and that of his helpless companion. He resolved to await developments, and with this end in view, crouched down behind the rocks out of sight.

He had not long to wait; for in a few minutes the Tagal came over the rocks slowly, gazing sharply to the right and the left and then ahead. Passing Ben, he kept straight on, moving in the direction where Lieutenant Gilmore lay concealed.

CHAPTER III

CAUGHT BY SHARPSHOOTERS

"He'll stumble on the lieutenant — he can't help it!"

Such was the thought which surged through Ben Russell's mind as he saw the rebel sharpshooter move swiftly and silently in the direction of the hollow in the brush.

Exactly what to do he did not know, yet instinctively he followed the Tagal, keeping the sharpshooter covered with his revolver. He felt that a struggle was at hand and nerved himself to meet it.

The hollow was almost gained when the sharpshooter came to a sudden pause, with his eyes bent to the ground. He had discovered Ben's footprints in the wet grass, and was wondering if they were those of friend or foe.

Fearing the fellow would look around, the young captain wisely withdrew to the shelter of a near-by tree. A moment later the sharpshooter turned back

and began to follow the footprints he had discovered. He passed within ten paces of Ben, whose heart almost stopped beating for the moment, and then moved on toward the rocks.

"He's on my trail, and he'll soon catch up to me," reasoned the young officer. Then he thought of an old trick, frequently used by the Indians and the hunters of the West, as well as by certain wild animals, and walked in a semicircle toward the trail and overlapped it for a dozen steps. This done, he leaped to a near-by rock, and from this to another rock, and then into a tiny stream of water, thus breaking the trail.

Still the young officer was not satisfied, and reaching some more brushwood, he waited impatiently to see what the sharpshooter would do next. It had now begun to rain, but the downpour was not as heavy as he had expected.

Ten minutes passed, and to the young captain the time seemed an age. He knew Gilmore would become alarmed over his absence, and was on the point of returning to the hollow, when he saw the Tagal again, now following the trail back from the rocks.

The sharpshooter reached the point where the trail overlapped itself, and moved on for a hundred feet

further. Then he halted in perplexity and scratched his head. Ben watched every movement as a cat watches a mouse.

The sharpshooter had been fooled and he knew it, and at last he retraced his steps to where the trail overlapped itself. Then he hunted for the back trail, leading to the hollow, and finding it, passed on, with his rifle clutched tightly in both hands and his eyes peering ahead like those of a hawk.

"Captain, is that you?" It was Gilmore who spoke, not loudly, but still strong enough to be heard by the sharpshooter, who instantly came to a halt.

To have spoken would have been to expose himself, so Ben did not answer. Instead, he crossed the brushwood and came up directly behind the Tagal, who had his rifle up and pointed at the direction from which the voice had proceeded.

"I say, is that you, captain?" went on the injured man. His disability had made him more fearful than ever. He, too, had his weapon up, but his hand shook so it was doubtful if he would have been able to hit the object of his aim.

Still Ben did not answer, but came as close as possible to the sharpshooter, who now advanced several steps. Suddenly the Tagal caught sight of Gilmore

and took aim at the man. But before he could discharge the weapon, Ben reached under his arm and snatched it from his grasp.

"Bah! *Americano!*" ejaculated the sharpshooter, as he swung around and faced the young captain. Then he leaped forward to regain his rifle, but Ben struck him over the head with the stock, and he staggered back half dazed. In a moment more the American had him covered with a pistol.

"Hush!" he said warningly, and added in broken Spanish: "No noise, or I fire!"

"Pig!" growled the sharpshooter. "Pig! Give me back my Mauser!"

"Hush, I tell you, if you value your life."

The Tagal now understood and became silent, although he looked angry enough to annihilate the young officer who had thus got the better of him.

It must be confessed that Ben did not know what to do next. One object of his scouting had already been accomplished, — to find out if the enemy really had sharpshooters in the neighborhood, — and his main desire now was to get back to the American lines with Gilmore and without further trouble.

"Captain, who is that?" asked the lieutenant, feebly.

"A sharpshooter. I have just disarmed him."

"A sharpshooter! Why don't you fill him with lead?"

"I can't do that — now he is my prisoner. Besides, I don't want to arouse the whole neighborhood."

"Is he alone?"

"His friends are not far off."

"What are you going to do?"

"I hardly know. I can't take him and you both into camp, and I can't let him go."

"No, no, don't let him go. He'll bring the whole nest around our ears in no time."

"Put your hands up," said Ben to the prisoner, as best he could in Spanish. "And be careful of what you do, or I'll fire on you."

The language was understood, and the sharpshooter put up his dirty hands sullenly. Then Ben made him move into the hollow and sit down on a rock. The Tagal had now no weapon but a short knife, and this the young captain took from him.

"How many sharpshooters around here?" Ben asked.

"I do not know," was the short reply.

"Were you ordered to stay here all day?"

"No; we stay here so long as it pleases us."

"You were told that the Americans were coming in this direction?"

"No, but we suspect it."

"Why?"

At this the Tagal grinned. "Because our general has been waking them up."

"Of course you know just where your men are located on your picket line?" went on the young captain.

The sharpshooter did not quite understand this question, and Ben had to repeat it in several ways. At last the Tagal nodded slowly. Ben turned to Gilmore.

"Lieutenant, do you think you can allow that fellow to carry you on his back?"

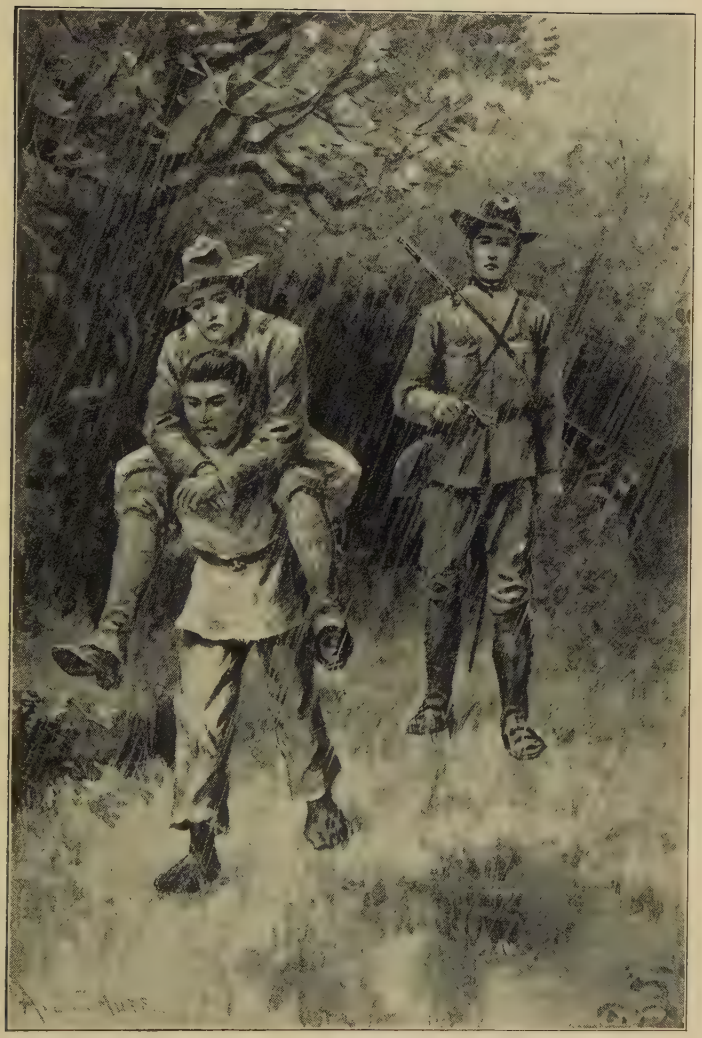
"Carry me?" queried Gilmore, in intense surprise.

"Yes. I'll see to it that he does it as carefully as possible."

"But I don't understand."

"I want this man to show the way back to our lines, between the Filipino sharpshooters. If he carries you, I can walk beside him and see to it that he plays us no trick. Now do you understand?"

"I do," cried the lieutenant, and his face brightened. "But will the fellow do it?"



HE RANGED UP BESIDE THE FELLOW WITH DRAWN PISTOL Page 27

"I'll make him do it," returned Ben, firmly.

A talk of several minutes with the Tagal followed. At first the sharpshooter was very unwilling, and shook his head steadily, but when Ben placed a pistol to the man's forehead he quickly changed his mind. Then Gilmore was lifted up, and the Tagal caught hold of his legs, while the lieutenant used what little strength he had to cling to the man's neck.

"Now you have got to get us past your sharpshooters in safety," said Ben, emphatically. "If you attempt to play us any trick, I'll shoot you on the spot. Forward!" And picking up the Tagal's rifle and slinging it over his shoulder, he ranged up beside the fellow, with drawn pistol ready for use.

It was plain to see the sharpshooter did not relish the task cut out for him, yet as he did not want to be shot, he moved forward as directed, and soon the hollow was left behind and the party of three was heading toward the rocks before mentioned.

The downfall of rain had now increased, and but little could be seen at a distance of a hundred feet or even less. The guide found a passage between the rocks and then moved directly northward.

"This is not the way to the American camp," said Ben, as he halted the sharpshooter.

"We must go around; six or eight sharpshooters are ahead," replied the Tagal, sourly.

"Oh, all right; but mind what I told you." And the young officer shook his pistol suggestively. On they went again, and no more was said for nearly quarter of an hour, when the sharpshooter came to a sudden halt.

"What's the trouble now?" began Ben, when he saw several forms moving in the brushwood ahead. "Are they your men?" he questioned quickly.

"Who can tell that — in this storm?" was the reply. And then the Tagal added: "I did not know anybody was here."

The forms were approaching rapidly, and there was no time to retreat. Suddenly the Tagal uttered a sharp cry and pushed Gilmore from him. He had recognized some fellow-sharpshooters, and fearing for his own safety he dodged behind a tree, but not before Ben had fired on him and wounded him in the shoulder.

The cry attracted the attention of the Filipinos, and the shot made them take to cover. But in a minute the young captain and his companion were

surrounded, and a voice called out, in very bad English: "*Americano*, surrender, or we shoot him dead!"

Ben looked around, lowering his pistol as he did so. He saw the barrels of four rifles pointed at him and the barrel of a fifth pointed at Gilmore, who lay flat on his back, almost breathless with pain.

"I — I surrender!" gasped the lieutenant. "Don't kill me in cold blood!"

"Do you surrender, *capitan?*" demanded the voice which had spoken before.

Ben hesitated, but only for a moment longer. He saw several determined faces peering at him, saw that the Filipinos were ready to pull trigger at the word of command, and felt that the discharge of rifles would more than likely prove deadly.

"I surrender," he said quietly, and his heart sank as he uttered the words.

"The *capitan* will throw down his pistol and his rifle," went on the Tagalog leader.

Without ceremony Ben did as requested. The Tagals came out of the brushwood, and the Americans were quickly surrounded and searched, and all of their other weapons taken from them. Then the man named Riva came forward and claimed his rifle and

his knife, telling his story with all the points possible in his favor.

A lively discussion followed. The sharpshooters were willing to conduct Ben to the rear, considering it a great feather in their cap to have captured an *Americano capitan*, but none of them wished to carry Gilmore.

"Shoot him where he lies," said two of the party, and one raised his rifle for that purpose.

"Don't, you inhuman brute!" protested Ben. "That is not war; it is murder!"

"Let him be as he is," said the leader of the sharpshooters. "If he lives, very well; if not, it will not matter. Come!" And he ordered Ben on, raising his rifle as he spoke. The young captain wished to protest, and even offered to carry Gilmore himself; but the Tagals would not listen, and so he had to move on, leaving his injured companion to his fate.

CHAPTER IV

A MEETING IN A NIPA HUT

Ben wondered where he was to be taken, but his captors remained silent on the subject, and at last threatened to shoot him on the spot if he did not stop asking questions.

The trail led in the direction of the Pasig River, and as the party proceeded the ground became more and more sloppy, until all were wading in water up to their ankles. Meanwhile the downpour of rain continued, soaking the party to the skin. It was a cold rain calculated to strike one's very backbone, and made the young captain shiver.

At last, when Ben was coming to the conclusion that they were bound directly for the Laguna de Bay, the leader of the party made a turn to the southward. Here there had once been an extensive rice field, but this was now torn up and abandoned. Beyond the field, backed by a small growth of palm trees, was a nipa hut with several bamboo sheds surrounding it. The course was straight for the

nipa hut, and Ben was told to halt before it. Then the leader of the sharpshooters disappeared inside the structure.

The young captain suspected that the hut was a sort of headquarters for the sharpshooters, and in this he was right, for presently the leader of the party returned, followed by a Tagal wearing the uniform of a captain. The latter ordered the American into the hut, and Ben entered.

It was a low, dingy affair, dirty to the last degree, the ceiling covered with soot and the floor overrun with vermin. In the centre of the single apartment which it contained was a rude table, surrounded by several chairs, while in one corner rested some boxes of ammunition, and in another a few army stores.

The Filipino captain spoke broken English and seemed rather a good kind of a fellow. With a profound bow he invited Ben to take a seat.

"You have come in one big rain, *capitan*," he began. "You should have taken some better weather for your trip to our camp," and he smiled broadly.

"Thank you, but I didn't expect to come so far," returned Ben, rather amused at the show of humor, which is generally lacking in the average Tagal.

"I understand it must be so. But now you are

with us, and it is raining so hard, you will not object to remaining?"

"I suppose I'll have to stay," said Ben, bluntly.

"Why put the matter so harshly, *capitan?* I will count you as my guest."

"If you will count me as a guest, do me a favor."

"Anything I can do I will do gladly."

"Then send some men back for my companion."

"What was the trouble with him?"

"He fell on the rocks and hurt his back."

"That is truly unfortunate, *capitan.* But it would do small good for me to send back for him. Our hospital camps are already overcrowded — not one could take him in."

"He will die if left alone, without food or drink, and in this weather."

At this the Filipino captain shrugged his lean shoulders. "That must be his affair — not mine. But you may be mistaken. He may crawl back to his friends."

Ben shook his head slowly. He pitied Gilmore from the bottom of his heart. Yet a glance at the face of the individual before him told him that to argue the matter further would be useless.

"A portion of your army is pushing this way, I

believe?" went on the Filipino commander, slowly, and fixing his black eyes full upon the young officer.

"My comrade and I were pushing this way."

The Filipino frowned. Ben saw that he was now ready to throw aside his mask and get down to business. "You were spies?"

"I must decline to answer further questions, sir."

"You were spies, sent to find out our strength?" continued the Filipino.

Ben remained silent.

"Are you going to answer, or will you take the consequences, *capitan?*"

"I have nothing further to say."

"But I will make you talk!" cried the rebel, his voice rising. "I have never yet been balked, either by Spaniards or *Americanos*. Do you know who I am? I am Captain Relosus."

At the mention of that name Ben could not help but start, for he had heard it many times before. Captain Relosus was one of the leading sharpshooters and spies among the Tagals, and it was known that he had been in Manila more than once, on secret missions for General Aguinaldo. It was Relosus who aided in the conspiracy to burn down the capital, and it was also this man who had, on

three different occasions, persuaded American soldiers to desert from the ranks and throw in their fortunes with the insurgents.

"You are the noted Captain Relosus, he who escaped from Manila but a few weeks ago?" questioned Ben, slowly, hardly knowing what else to say.

"The same, and I am glad you know of me, *capitan*, for you now understand with whom you have to deal. I allow nothing and nobody to stand in my way." Captain Relosus drew himself up to his full height of five feet four inches. "When I ask a question it must be answered."

Again there was a pause, and each captain looked the other squarely in the face. Ben saw that the man before him was an equal mixture of shrewdness, conceit, dandyism, and brutal stubbornness — a combination due to his mixed Spanish, Tagalog, and Malayan blood. He was a man who might be easily coaxed, but never driven.

Noting all this, Ben forced a smile to his face. "Captain, you are a wonderful man. Your escape from the city is the talk of the town. How ever did you accomplish it?"

"Ha! ha! I fooled the *Americano* guards nicely,

did I not? So they talk about it, eh? Well, let them talk, they will never find out how it was done."

"You seem to go and come at your will."

"And why not? Have we not many friends still in Manila? If you knew the truth you would be surprised. Some day General Otis —" He broke off short. "Bah, I am talking too much, when it is you who must speak. Answer me, does your General Lawton command at the waterworks now?"

"I am sure you know everything, Captain Relosus, so what is the use for me to speak? I imagine you know more than I do, for I came from San Isidro but a few days ago."

"Ha! General Lawton was at San Isidro, I know that, and if you were with him and are now here, he must be here too." The Tagal captain grated his teeth. "We shall meet, and I will kill him!" he muttered in his native dialect. "And I will kill General Otis, too!"

"I should like to know what is to be done with me," said Ben, after another pause, during which the rebel began to pace the floor.

"What do I care what becomes of you, *capitan?* You have played your game and lost, and I must look

ahead. One thing is sure — you shall not go back; have no fear on that score."

"But you will treat me as a prisoner of war?"

The rebel shrugged his shoulders. "What do you mean by that? When Santa Cruz was taken by your Lawton some months ago, what did they do to my brothers in arms? Sixteen were made prisoners, while forty-six wounded Tagals were shot or stabbed in the back. Ha! do not deny it, for it is true, true! And when Angat was taken, during the march on San Isidro, what happened then? Six innocent natives were slain, including a mother and her child. Your soldiers said it was an accident. Bah! Perhaps it will be an accident if you are some day shot in the back while you are a prisoner among us. You say we are butchers — that the Spaniards were butchers here and in Cuba! Your soldiers are just as bad, and some of your wild men from your Western states are worse! No, no, do not deny it, for I have seen these things with my own eyes." The Filipino shook his fists in Ben's face. "Perhaps you are not like some of them, but oh, when I remember what I have seen it makes my blood boil, and I would go out and kill, kill, kill, every *Americano!*"

The passionate outburst lasted for several minutes,

and toward the end Captain Relosus spoke so rapidly, and in Spanish, that Ben understood only a small portion of what was said. At last the rebel turned on him sharply. "You will not speak? Very well, but the consequences will be on your own head. Do not forget that I gave you fair warning." With this he turned to the door and went out.

It must be confessed that the young captain was greatly downcast, nor did his spirits improve when two Filipinos came in with a rope and bound his hands behind him. Then he was forced into a sitting position on the wet flooring of the hut and tied fast to one of the corner posts. This work was just completed when several shots were heard, coming from a distance, and the rebels ran outside to learn what they meant.

Left to himself, Ben wondered what would happen next. He knew that the American forces at the waterworks intended to move before nightfall, but would they come in that direction, or strike out to the southeastward? The shots worried him also, for he could not help but connect them with the possible fate of poor Gilmore.

An hour went by, and the rain came down more furiously than ever, causing a pool of water to collect

near the door of the nipa hut, the flooring of which was nothing but smooth mud. Nobody came near him, and he was half inclined to believe that something unusual had turned up and caused the rebels to retreat, leaving him deserted.

At last there was the sound of a caribao cart approaching, the caribaos splashing dismally through the mud and water of the trail. The cart halted close beside the nipa hut, and from under a rubber covering crawled a tall Spaniard wearing the uniform of a Filipino general. The Spaniard was followed by a short and exceedingly stout Tagal boy, carrying some luggage and a brace of old-fashioned army pistols.

"This is the spot, Carlos?" demanded the Spanish officer, of the cart driver.

"The same, general."

"But I see nobody around."

"They were all here last night, general. I saw them with my own eyes."

"Then I will go in and wait. If you see Captain Relosus or any of the others, send them to me at once."

"I will, general."

"Tell them I bring news of great importance," concluded the Spaniard, and then he stepped into the

hut, shaking the water from his feathered hat as he did so.

The gloom outside made the interior of the hut, which boasted of but one window, quite dark, and for several minutes the Spaniard did not discover Ben's presence. He stood near the doorway and ordered the Tagal boy to bring in his luggage and pistols, and told the youth to hunt up something to eat if he could.

"I will do my best, General Lupez," answered the boy, and ran away to one of the sheds close to which a camp-fire had been burning.

At the mention of the name Ben's heart gave a bound of curiosity. General Lupez! Could this be the man, José Lupez, who had run away with the fifty thousand dollars, obtained from Benedicto Lupez, which belonged to the Hearthstone Saving Institution?

CHAPTER V

THE TAKING OF CAINTA AND TAYTAY

"Ha, a prisoner! Why did you not speak, man?"

"I didn't know that it was my place to speak," answered Ben, coldly. "I hadn't anything to say."

"You are an *Americano capitan?* A good haul, truly."

"And you are a Filipino general?"

"Yes."

"Am I addressing General José Lupez?" went on the young captain, curiously.

"You are." The Spaniard stared at Ben. "Where have we met before? I remember it not."

"I don't believe we ever met, General Lupez. But I have often heard of you, and I have seen your photograph."

"I see. And what is your name?"

The young captain hesitated. Should he reveal himself? Probably it would do no harm, unless

General Lupez should hold him responsible for Benedicto's capture. But would it do any good?

"I prefer to keep my name to myself, sir."

The Spaniard drew up his shoulders. "As you will. Perhaps you are somebody of importance."

"No, I am only an ordinary soldier. I was a lieutenant, but our captain was shot, and—"

"I see—they made you *capitan;* very good—if you are worth the position. But you are not much of a *capitan* now, ha! ha! Who caught you? some of *Capitan* Relosus's men?"

"Yes, general."

"They are a shrewd set—some of our best. Well, if you are a spy, your days are numbered; probably you already know that." The general paused. "You have been in Manila lately? Did you ever hear of my brother, Benedicto Lupez?"

"Quite often. He is in prison."

"As a rebel?"

"Both as a rebel and on a charge of robbery. It is said he stole some money brought to Luzon by an American."

"'Tis not true!" exclaimed José Lupez, growing red in the face. "I know the whole story, and my brother came by the money honestly. The charge is

one gotten up by you *Americanos* merely to create a sensation."

"But I was told Señor Benedicto Lupez had confessed and had surrendered part of the money."

"Indeed!" General Lupez gazed at Ben curiously. "And what do they say he did with the balance of the money?"

"They say he gave it to his brother."

"To me? How absurd! The invention truly of pigs, vile *Americano* pigs!" The general began to pace the floor nervously. "Why should I take his money, since I have always had more than enough of my own? 'Tis truly the invention of *Americano* pigs! They are willing to say everything that is bad of a Spaniard or a Tagal."

"They say that you took five thousand dollars of the money and bought your title in the army with it," went on Ben, anxious, if possible, to draw the Spaniard out.

"Again I say absurd. The appointment came to me direct from General Aguinaldo, who is our President also, and it came without solicitation on my part, although I will admit some of my friends insisted on my appointment, knowing my military ability. I have no money but my own, and I want

none. The *Americanos* — " General Lupez broke off short. "Ah, *Capitan* Relosus, here at last. I was wanting to see you."

"There is no time now!" burst out the captain of the sharpshooters, speaking in the Tagalog dialect. "The *Americanos* are in the jungle below, and pressing forward with all speed. We must retreat!"

"The enemy! A large number?"

"My men counted a regiment at least, and more to the southward. We cannot hold this ground; it is too open. We must retreat to Cainta, and possibly to Taytay."

The captain of the sharpshooters showed that he was much aroused. He had been followed by several of his men, and one of these now liberated Ben from the corner post of the hut.

"You must go with us," said Captain Relosus. "And go quickly and without resistance, unless you wish to be shot."

No more was said, and in a moment more Ben found himself outside. The rain had ceased, but the air was full of moisture and the trail all but impassable. At a distance there was steady firing, showing that a lively skirmish was on.

Before Ben could look around him, he was hurried along the trail leading to the lake shore. Here there had been a large Filipino encampment, but all the soldiers were now either at the front or in full retreat. He had a rebel at each side of him, the pair holding on to the rope which bound his hands behind him. Each rebel had a gun slung over his shoulder, and looked like a fairly good fighter, even though barefooted and in tatters.

"Where are you going to take me?" asked the young captain, as they hurried along. But neither would answer the question, even if he understood it, which was doubtful, and both only grinned wickedly and trotted him on faster than ever.

All the while they were running Ben was working at his wrists, and presently, as they came to a patch of woods, he was delighted to find that his right hand could be slipped from its fastening.

"Now or never!" he thought, and watching his opportunity, he gave the guard on his right a tremendous shove which pitched the Tagal headlong over a tree root. Then he leaped at the other fellow, snatching for the rifle as he did so. The Mauser fell to the ground, and the Tagal on top of it. Before he could get up, the young captain bowled him over

a second time, seized the gun, and leaped behind the nearest tree.

The action came none too soon, for he was not yet out of sight when the first guard, recovering from his tumble, scrambled up, pointed his rifle, and blazed away, the bullet clipping the tree within six inches of Ben's head. The young captain thought first to return the fire, and raised the Mauser for that purpose; but then he realized his scarcity of ammunition, and turning, ran at the top of his speed without discharging the weapon.

Ben did not know where he was going, and just then he did not care. His one thought was to get away from his enemies, who were now shouting wildly to others that the *Americano* had escaped. On and on he dashed, deeper and deeper into the thickets, until the heavy undergrowth and interlacing tropical vines refused him further progress. It was both dark and wet, and when he came to a halt, he could scarcely see his hand before his face.

"If only our troops come this way," he thought. He listened with strained ears and heard shot after shot fired, but they seemed to be mainly in the direction of the lake.

It was some time ere he could regain his breath,

and after this he set to work to liberate his left wrist from the rope which still encircled it. There was no comfort in standing in water up to his knees, for the bottom of the jungle was little better than a marsh, and reaching for some vines clinging to a tree, he pulled himself up to the lower branches. Here he sat awaiting developments.

In the meantime the American column was swinging forward rapidly. The troops, which were under the immediate command of General Hall, consisted of some Oregon, Colorado, and Wyoming volunteers, and portions of the Fourth and Ninth Infantry, and Fourth Cavalry, as well as the battalion of Colonel Darcy's regiment to which Ben belonged. They had with them four mounted guns, which, however, were moved along the muddy roads only with the greatest of difficulty.

It was General Lawton's plan to have General Hall's column close in on the rebels on the north, and drive them down the shore of the Laguna de Bay (now commonly called by the Americans "Bay Lake") to Pasig, where the American troops stationed at that point were to unite with the others in hemming in the insurgents.

The plan was an excellent one, but the nature of

the ground covered made it difficult of execution, and General Hall's column had barely come in sight of Antipolo, when it was fired upon. A running fire continued for two miles, when the rebels were discovered in a well-constructed line of trenches on the distant hillside.

"We must scatter them, boys," said the general. "General Lawton expects every man to do his duty. Forward!" And forward they did go, one command after another, Colonel Darcy's first battalion well to the front, with Major Morris commanding, and one of the lieutenants of Company B leading Ben's command. Many wondered what had become of Captain Russell and Lieutenant Gilmore, and some gave up both as dead.

The trenches were gained after a fight lasting half an hour, in which a dozen rebels were killed and several Americans were badly wounded, and then the column pushed on, over roads which were little better than gullies of mud. None of the wagons or guns could get through, and all had to be left behind.

As soon as General Lawton understood how matters were faring he ordered the troops at Pasig forward, in the direction of Cainta, which was

shelled at a lively rate about three o'clock in the afternoon. This was the firing which reached Ben's ears, for the best part of the day had been spent when Captain Relosus announced to General Lupez that they must move. The shelling soon cleared Cainta of all natives, soldiers or otherwise, the majority of whom fled toward Taytay. Later still, Taytay was also taken, and then the rebel army retreated to Morong and to Antipolo. The natives of Taytay were very much disturbed at the fighting, and after it was over could only be subdued with the greatest of difficulty. It was rumored in the village that the *Americanos* were about to massacre all the women and children, and a number of mothers fled to the jungle, taking their little ones with them. Long after, it came out that the rumor was started by a Filipino recruiting officer, who used this means as an inducement to get the male inhabitants to join the rebel army. Whether his ruse succeeded to any extent or not, is not known.

Sitting in the tree in the jungle, Ben heard the firing grow more and more distinct, and late in the afternoon heard the strange whining of a shell as it sped over the tree-tops.

"Hullo, they must certainly be getting close now," he mused. "I wonder if it is safe for me to try to go on?"

Feeling he could not remain in his present position forever, he slowly descended to the ground and commenced to retrace his steps, feeling that it would be foolhardy to go deeper into that labyrinth of bushes and vines. He picked his way with care and kept the rifle before him ready for use. Once or twice he stumbled and went headlong in the mud and water. He was just getting up from one of these tumbles, when a slight scream reached his ears.

The scream sounded as if it came from a woman, and he came to a dead halt to listen. But it was not repeated, and now, the firing having died away in the distance, not a sound broke the stillness.

"Perhaps I only fancied it," he mused, and moved forward again, but with increased caution. Then he heard a low voice start to speak, only to be cut off at the third word. A swishing of bushes followed, coming from close at hand.

Some one was in that vicinity, some one who knew of his presence. Whether the unknown was friend or enemy, he could not tell, yet he felt pretty certain it was an enemy.

CHAPTER VI

A SCENE IN A MONASTERY

Captain Russell had thoroughly learned the old proverb to "make haste slowly," especially when facing an enemy in the dark. Twice before had he been in a situation similar to the present, so it was not novel even though trying. On those previous occasions he had escaped with a whole skin, and he intended to do so now if the deed was capable of accomplishment.

Making as little noise as possible, he dropped upon the wet ground, at the same time doing his best to pierce the darkness around him. Then, as he could see nothing, he picked up a stick lying near and threw it into the air, taking care not to hit the bushes close at hand. The stick came down about twenty feet away, landing in the brush with sufficient noise to attract the attention of the others in that vicinity. There followed a movement and a low murmur of voices, and then Ben

caught sight of a woman, clad in native attire and carrying a little girl in her arms.

"*Alto!* (Stop!)" he called, in Spanish, and added hastily, "Are you alone?"

At the question the woman gave a slight scream. "I beg of you, *Americano*, no shoot!" she wailed, in the Tagalog dialect. "No shoot! I have harmed nobody!"

"Are you alone?" repeated the young captain, and took a step closer, at which the little girl began to cry violently.

"Yes, I am alone," answered the woman. "Oh, good señor, you will not harm little Muro and myself?"

"No, I will not harm you, my good woman. But where did you come from?"

"From Taytay."

"And what are you doing here?"

"The soldiers are at Taytay — they are fierce — they shoot and kill — I thought we would not be safe, so I took Muro and ran into the jungle."

"The American soldiers are at Taytay? How far is that from here?"

"Not a very long walk, señor. Oh, the war is dreadful — we are very much afraid!" And the

woman hugged her little daughter tightly to her breast.

"Are any of the native soldiers in this jungle?"

"I think not. The army fled to Morong and to other places."

"Then show me the way to Taytay. I will see to it that you and your child are not harmed."

"You are sure of this?"

"Yes. See, I am a captain, and you can trust me. It is only the brutes who make war on the women and children, and they have no authority for so doing. Come; we will get to Taytay without delay."

The woman hesitated, but fearing that Ben might use violence, she finally consented to lead the way back to the village, and the party of three moved on through the jungle to where there was a well-defined trail. They had proceeded along the trail less than quarter of a mile when a shout greeted their ears and a small detachment of American volunteers burst into view.

"Hike her up, boys!" was the cry. "Hike her up, and don't give the natives a chance to rest!"

"Halt!" ordered Ben. "Lester, don't you know me?"

"Captain Russell!" ejaculated the soldier addressed. "We were thinking you were dead."

"Mine cracious, it vos der cabtain, sure enough!" burst out a voice in German accents, and Carl Stummer, a volunteer who had served with Ben ever since the campaign in Cuba, rushed forward. "Dis vos der best news yet, py chiminy!"

"Captain Russell, sure enough, the saints be praised!" put in an Irish voice, and Dan Casey, another of the old volunteers, pressed to Ben's side. "Sure, captain, an' me an' Carl was afther gittin' ready to hold a wake fer ye, — only we couldn't foind the corpse!" And his honest face beamed broadly.

"Well, I'm a pretty lively corpse!" replied Ben. "But where are you bound?"

"Bound to clear out the rebels," answered Lester, who was in charge of the detachment.

"Und ve vos pount to look for you und Lieutenant Gilmore," put in Stummer. "Didn't der lieutenant been mit you?"

"He was with me, but he got hurt, and the Filipinos separated us. As soon as the locality is cleared, we must send out a detachment to hunt for him. Where is the rest of the company?"

"At Taytay."

"Then we might as well turn back, for there are no rebels in sight on this trail," continued Ben; and soon the detachment turned about and marched back to the village. The native woman and her child went along, but disappeared as soon as the first of the huts of the settlement came into sight.

At Taytay Ben found not only his own battalion, but also some of the Western volunteers and a small detachment of regulars. The first battalion had taken possession of a large storehouse, and were making themselves as comfortable as circumstances permitted, which was not saying much, since the village had been thoroughly looted by the rebels ere leaving it, and so far no American supplies had come up. Some of the boys of Ben's company had caught a little pig, which the company's butcher had slaughtered, and the cooks were now trying to roast the porker over a fire built outside the storehouse.

"Captain Russell!" exclaimed Major Morris, as he strode up and put out his hand. "Then the Tagals didn't get you, after all?"

"They did, though; but I got away, major." And Ben told his story in detail, to which not only the major but also a number of others listened with interest.

"We must send out a detachment for the lieutenant by all means," said the major, when the captain had finished. "But do you think we can locate him in the dark?"

"It may be difficult, but I don't think it's impossible, major."

"Are you too tired to undertake the task?"

"I'd have to be a good deal more tired before I'd forget a fellow-soldier who was in Gilmore's fix," answered Ben, warmly. "Just let me swallow a cup of coffee and a sandwich, and I'll be on the way."

"Sorry, but there is no coffee in camp. I can supply you with a little bread, though, and your cooks are getting some pork into shape for eating."

"Then I'll take a pork chop, some bread, and a drink of water, and let it go at that. But I'd rather have the hot coffee."

"Want a little whiskey?"

"You know I don't drink, major," and so speaking, Ben hurried off. Inside of ten minutes he had had his "bite," as he expressed it, and then he called Stummer, Casey, and half a dozen others to him and told them of what he wished to do. All were eager to go along, regardless of the possible danger.

In order to reach the spot where Gilmore had been

left, the party had to take a side road running toward Antipolo. The rain had now cleared away entirely, but the night was pitch dark. The heat was oppressive — of that peculiar quality which follows a heavy downfall of rain in the tropics.

"Sure an' this heat afther the rain makes wan feel loike he was comin' out av a Turkish bath," observed Dan Casey, as they trudged along. "I niver seen the loike av this counthry, wid its hotness an' its coldness, an' its rain, an' dryness aftherwards."

"Und its mud," put in Carl Stummer. "Ton't forgot dot peautiful mud, Tan. I neffer seen me so many kinds of mud in mine whole life pefore — plack mud, red mud, prown mud, yeller mud, und all der stickiest mud vot effer vos alretty!" And at this a laugh went up from the others, who all agreed with the speaker, for, as Ben has since expressed it, it was the "muddiest mud" any of them had ever experienced. The wagon trains never came through, and had to be sent back to Manila until the wet season was at an end. During that campaign one small but heavy field-piece sank so deep in the road-bed that it went out of sight and, so far as known, has never been recovered.

Nearly a mile of the distance to Antipolo was cov-

ered when the detachment came in sight of a small stone building, half tumbled down and covered with vines, standing close to the roadside. This building had been built by the Spanish friars of Luzon many years before, being used as both a monastery and a school, but a thunderbolt had once wrecked the steeple, and from that time on there had been a superstition connected with the place and it had been practically deserted.

There was a light shining out from an upper window of the monastery, and as the detachment drew closer the Americans heard two voices high-pitched in anger, speaking in Spanish.

"Something is wrong," said Ben. "One of those voices sounds like that of a woman."

"Sure an' it is a faymale!" cried Dan Casey. "An' she's afther wantin' help, if I know anything about it," he added.

The voices grew more distinct as they drew closer, and Ben caught the words, in Spanish: "Leave me, you villain! I want nothing more to do with you."

"You must give me the box, Inez!" replied a brutal voice. "I will not leave you without it."

"The box is mine, Barnabas Moval," came in the

woman's voice. "My father left me those lands, and you shall not take them from me."

"Fool, the lands are mine!" stormed the man. "And if you will not give up the box willingly, then I will take it from you."

"Never!"

"And why not? We are alone here — not a soul is within hearing. If I cannot obtain that box by fair means, I will take it by foul. Do you not know that the *Americanos* are in this neighborhood, and that they have shot down more than one Tagalog woman?"

"And you would shoot me and let the authorities suspect it was the work of the *Americanos?*" The woman gave a scream. "No! no! you shall not! you dare not!"

"I dare do anything, Inez Garabella, when it pleases me. Now, be quick. Will you give me the box, or not?"

"It is mine, you know it is mine, — and the lands are mine, too. Oh, Barnabas, how can you be so cruel — and after you promised my dead father you would take care of me —"

"Bah! take care of you, you ugly thing? No, you can go where you please and do what you please.

But I must and will have the box. Out with it at once, or I will shoot!"

During this conversation Ben had run into the monastery, and he was now mounting the well-worn stone stairs, two steps at a time, with Stummer and Casey close at his heels. The door to the lighted room was on a crack, and he peeped in.

The scene was truly a dramatic one. Standing upon one side of a table was a woman of twenty or twenty-two, with black hair, black eyes, and a face that looked like that of a gypsy. On one cheek was a rough, red scar, quite spoiling the little beauty of which she might otherwise have been possessed.

Opposite to this strange-looking creature stood a man, evidently of mixed blood, in which the Malayan predominated, tall, thin, with short stubby hair, high cheek-bones, and teeth which showed like those of a wolf. He was dressed in the uniform of a Tagalog soldier and held a pistol in his hand.

Both the man and the woman were almost breathless, as if they had been running hard. The woman had her hands up as if to protect herself from a shot. As Ben looked into the room the man raised his pistol to the level of the woman's head.

"Drop that pistol!" Page 61

CHAPTER VII

A GUERILLA BROUGHT TO TERMS

"DROP that pistol!"

The order, delivered in broken Spanish, came as a thunderclap out of a clear sky to the man who was threatening the woman with the weapon. He gave an ejaculation of astonishment, then turned swiftly toward the doorway, which was now wide open. When he saw Ben standing there, with pistol drawn, and backed up by two soldiers with levelled rifles, his face fell and paled.

"What — what brings you?" he stammered in his native tongue.

"Do you talk English?" demanded Ben. He never spoke anything else unless it was absolutely necessary.

"A leetle, señor, a verra leetle."

"What do you mean by threatening this woman in this fashion?"

"She — ah — she is a verra wicked woman."

"She doesn't look half as wicked as you."

"Sure, an' that's roight," whispered Dan Casey. "His face before a jury would be enough to hang him, the haythin!"

"She steala one box from me," went on Barnabas Moval, trying his best to recover his composure. "She is a verra bad woman. She has de box in her pocket now."

"But she says the box is hers — I heard her."

"Ha! you heara de talk we haf? She tells lies, señor *capitan* — lies! I am one honest man, *capitan*."

"Ton't you vos pelief him, cabtain," put in Stummer. "Dot lady ain't no peauty, put I'll pet she's all right, annahow!" And he shook his curly head emphatically.

"What have you to say, madam?" demanded Ben, turning to the woman, who had listened to the conversation in much bewilderment. As yet she knew not whether the newcomers would prove to be friends or foes.

At this the lady shook her head, for she understood only a few words of English. Mustering up his best Spanish, Ben put the question again.

"He does not speak one word of truth," she answered quickly with blazing eyes. "He is a villain, señor, with a heart as black as the night.

When my father was alive, he tried to get our lands away from him; now my father is dead, he is trying to make of me a beggar — yes, a beggar. But he shall not do it. You will help me, will you not? I cannot believe the *Americanos* are as black as they say! Surely you do not look like one who would harm a defenceless woman!" And she clasped her hands pleadingly, as she took a step closer to Ben.

"Where are the lands of which you speak?" asked Ben, curiously. The manner of this strange woman interested him.

"At Biloguana, many miles to the north of this locality. My father had there a great rice plantation, and also a mine from which he took not a little silver. Friar Ponprè was jealous of my father's wealth, and he and this wicked man laid a plot to send my father to Borneo and then to confiscate the lands and the mine. But my father fought the men who would carry him off and got back home with a cracked head and a broken shoulder, from which he never recovered. Friar Ponprè escaped to Desdenas, and this man hid himself until after my father was dead and buried. Then he came out boldly and protested that he had had nothing to do with Friar Ponprè's plot, but that my father had sold him the

lands and the mine and had received pay for them. He claimed my father had buried the money received, saying he would thus hide it until the war was over—"

"And it is true," burst in Barnabas Moval. "I paid him every dollar he asked."

"'Tis not true, not one word. On his death-bed my father told me of a will he had made, leaving all the property to me; and how could he leave that property to me if he had sold it?"

"Have you the will?"

"No. He told me he had placed it in a box with some land deeds and private papers, but when I looked for it, it was not there."

"Of course it was not there," came from Barnabas Moval. "'Tis a story made out of the wings of a worm. Do not believe anything she says, *capitan*."

"Be quiet," ordered Ben, turning on the man, sharply. "I will listen to this woman first. He was going to take a box from you. Was that the box of private papers you mentioned just now?"

"Yes, señor captain."

"What are you doing here with them?"

"I grew afraid to keep them at home. I have a dear friend in Manila, and thought I would take

them there for safe keeping. This man followed me from Biloguana to Malolos and from there to Antipolo. To-night I thought to escape to Manila, but he came after me, and I ran in here to hide."

Ben turned to Barnabas Moval. "You wear the uniform of a soldier. Why are you not with the army? Are you a spy?"

"No, no, *capitan*, I am no spy!" answered the man, in sudden fear. "'Tis true I followed this woman, for she has that which is mine. I am an honest soldier, attached to the command under General Adoz."

"What, that guerilla!" cried Ben, for he had heard of the terrible General Adoz many times. The man mentioned had operated around Malolos ever since the opening of hostilities, but was considered more of a robber chief than an insurgent.

"He is not honest!" cried the woman. "He, too, is a guerilla and fights only for the sake of looting. At Malolos the houses of two Chinamen were sacked by him and three others, and another house was sacked at San Isidro, just after the American troops went away."

"In that case he is a man worth capturing," said Ben, sternly. "Men, make him your prisoner."

At this order Barnabas Moval began to rave wildly, saying the woman was a traitor and worse, and that the foolish *Americano capitan* would soon learn how he had been fooled. But Ben cut him short by stating that the woman would also be required to go along. Then Moval was disarmed by Casey and Stummer, who tied his hands behind him; and the party left the monastery almost as quickly as they had entered it.

"What will you do with me?" questioned Inez Garabella, as she walked beside Ben. "Surely you will not consider me a prisoner of war?"

"That matter will have to be considered later," returned the young captain, gravely. "I shall see you safe to camp and then to Manila, and there my superiors will take matters in charge. Personally I believe your story, and if it is believed at headquarters, you will soon be released."

At these kind words the eyes of the woman softened. "You are kind, just as I thought when I first saw you, *capitan*. May I ask your name?"

"I am Captain Benjamin Russell."

"I shall not forget you easily, Captain Russell. Had you not come up when you did, that villain would have taken my life." And she shuddered.

"I shall report his actions in detail, and if he is a follower of this notorious General Adoz, I imagine it will go hard with him. The Spaniards had a price of a thousand dollars upon Adoz's head, and we are just as anxious to get hold of him and his guerillas as they were."

Ben did not wish to take the man and the woman along on the hunt for Lieutenant Gilmore, and after a brief consultation it was decided to send them to Taytay in custody of Carl Stummer and a private named Horseford. As Barnabas Moval was bound, it was not anticipated that there would be any trouble on the journey, since no rebels were to be seen anywhere.

This settled, and the party of four having moved off, Ben started ahead more rapidly than ever, in the direction of the field where he had left the injured lieutenant. It was no easy matter to locate the spot in the darkness, and at the risk of stirring up the enemy he gave the men permission to scatter and call Gilmore's name in guarded tones.

It was Dan Casey who at last stumbled upon the lieutenant, lying unconscious a short distance from the hollow where Ben had left him. There

was a bullet hole in his shoulder from which the blood had been flowing freely.

"Sure, an' he's next to bein' dead," muttered Casey, after calling up the others. "Some feller plugged him." And he got down to examine the wound.

Ben was shocked, but did not allow his feelings to overcome him. On several occasions he had practised the art of first aid to the injured, as taught to the volunteers, and now he drew forth a bandage he had thoughtfully brought along, and bound up the wound, so that there should be no more loss of blood. Then he applied some stimulants and did what he otherwise could to revive the sufferer. But poor Gilmore was too far gone to open his eyes or speak, and only gasped and groaned as they placed him on a stretcher.

"I'll tell you what, there's small glory in this," remarked one of the soldiers, as they moved on with their burden. "Folks at home don't know how terrible the dark side of war really is."

"Right you are, Smader," answered the young captain. "There is more work than glory, and a good deal of bitterness added. Now Gilmore here has nobody at home but a widowed sister, who

writes to him constantly. I wonder how that poor woman will take the news when she hears how he has been cut down?" And he heaved a long sigh.

It was past midnight when the party returned to the encampment of the first battalion. Fortunately Surgeon Fallox was with the battalion and in a position to give Lieutenant Gilmore his immediate attention. The injured man was made as comfortable as possible, and the surgeon made a careful examination of the case.

"The wound is not a serious one, although he has lost considerable blood and is greatly weakened thereby," he announced. "His back, though, is bad, and it may be many a day before he is able to walk again."

"But he will eventually recover?"

"I think so, although his back may be weak for years."

Ben found that Inez Garabella and Barnabas Moval had been taken care of by Major Morris, who was greatly interested in all the male prisoner had to say. "This Moval is a sly one," said the major to the young captain. "I am trying to pump him about General Adoz, but it is precious little I can get out of him."

"If you could catch this Adoz, it would be a big feather in your cap, major."

"I know it, captain."

"Will you send them to Manila at once?"

"Yes; they can go to-morrow, with the wounded ones." The major lowered his voice. "Between you and me, I believe we'll all be going back to Manila soon."

"Why? because the rebels were so slippery?"

"Yes. They don't want to engage in a regular battle, and it seems impossible to corner them into doing so."

As it was late, the conversation was not prolonged, and soon Ben was in the land of dreams, sleeping as soundly as if in a bed at home.

The next day was Sunday, and early in the morning several cascos from Pasig were called into use, and two battalions of Washington troops, under Colonel Wholley, set out for Morong, escorted by several small gunboats. Morong was vigorously shelled, and then the troops landed, only to find that the insurgents had taken shelter on the distant hills. A running fight followed, and ended when the rebels made a break for the mountains, where it was next to impossible to follow them.

In the meantime General Hall had changed his tactics, and now he drove straight through Antipolo, and being joined by additional troops, moved on to Teresa, a small settlement on the highway to Morong. This movement took the whole of Sunday, which was hot and sultry, and resulted in the prostration of many of the soldiers by the heat. Near Morong the Americans came upon the rear of General Pio del Pilar's wagon train and captured some of the stores and a few caribaos and carts, but the others managed to join the rest of the train in the mountains. On Monday General Hall's command joined that of Colonel Wholley at Morong, and after a necessary rest left a garrison at the town on the lake and moved back in the direction of Manila.

At this late day it is impossible to say what the benefits of the expedition to Morong were, excepting that it held the rebels somewhat in check and kept them from getting too close to Manila during the rainy season, which now came upon the islands in all of its fury, causing the Laguna de Bay and the Pasig River to overflow their banks and doing much damage to the shipping both inland and on Manila Bay. As soon as the fighting was over, many of the Tagals

returned to their old haunts, some putting on civilians' dress and passing for *amigos* (friends). In the meantime the followers of Aguinaldo also came back to San Isidro and Tarlac in the north, while a large body of the rebels in the south moved up to surround Parañaque and other towns lying below Manila on the bay. Hostilities between the Americans and the insurgents had now lasted nearly five months, and the end was by no means in sight. On the contrary, it was admitted that Uncle Sam must have additional troops without delay, if the islands were to be pacified, and enlistments in all of our large cities went forward as vigorously as ever.

On returning to Manila, Ben's first movement was to see how his brother Larry and his old chum, Gilbert Pennington, were faring. He found both sitting up and wonderfully improved.

"I shall be out of here in another week or so," said Larry, with something of his old-time smile. "And I can tell you I'll not be sorry."

"And I'll be out, too," put in Gilbert, and added, "How did you make out on that last excursion?"

"Well, I got my share of adventure," returned Ben, and sitting down he gave them a complete account of what had happened.

"What, you met José Lupez!" ejaculated Larry. "What became of him?"

"I can't say. I was glad enough to escape. But I hope I'll meet him again."

"What are they going to do with that man Barnabas Moval?" asked Gilbert.

"Put him in jail as a follower of General Adoz, the guerilla."

"And the woman?"

"I think they will let her go. She has friends here who are ready to vouch for her good character."

"It's a pity you didn't catch Adoz instead of one of his hangers-on," continued the Southerner.

"Or that José Lupez," put in Larry.

At this Ben could not help but laugh. "You want too much at a time," he said. "Let us see what the future brings forth." And there the subject was dropped.

CHAPTER VIII

WALTER AND SI DORING

"WALTER!"

"What is it, Si?"

"Answer me a conundrum."

"All right, fire away, but don't make it too hard, for this heat has made my brain lazy."

"When is this tub going to reach Manila?"

"I thought you would ask that question, Si Doring. How do I know? Go ask the quartermaster, or the deck officer, or the cook. They know more about it than I do." Walter Russell arose from the deck and stretched himself. "Joking aside, though, it is an awfully long-winded trip, isn't it?"

"Long?" returned Si Doring, a thin-nosed, bright-eyed young Yankee sailor. "I tell you, Walter, that don't half express it. It's wuss nor long, ten times over. To me it's about a year since we sailed from Honolulu, and five years since we left San Francisco. If we don't hurry up, by

the time we reach the Philippines the war will be over, the back taps sounded, and everybody will have forgotten there was any fighting."

"Don't worry, Si; we'll see enough of it, I reckon. We think this trip long because the transport *Central* isn't the armored cruiser *Brooklyn*, that's all."

"I don't see any sign of land yet."

"If all goes right, they expect to sight land day after to-morrow," put in a soldier standing near. "I heard the captain telling one of the lieutenants so."

"Did he say where we were?"

"Somewhere off the north coast of Luzon."

"If that's the case, we must be near where my brother Larry was once wrecked," said Walter Russell, with a sudden show of interest. "You remember, Si, I told you about it, and how he was picked up by Commodore Dewey."

"Yes, I remember. But I can tell you, I don't want to be wrecked." And the Yankee boy shook his head vigorously. "From what I have heard, the people living in the northern part of Luzon are reg'lar savages — used to be head-hunters, so an old soldier told me."

"I am anxious to learn how the war is progress-

ing and how Larry and Ben are making out. It seems an age since I last set eyes on them."

"Your brother must be doing well, or they wouldn't have made him a captain. I wonder what ship they'll assign us to when we get to Manila Bay? I'd just as lief go on a gunboat, for they seem to be doing more lately than the big ships. They can get closer to the coast and go up the rivers."

"We'll have to go where we are sent, so far as that is concerned," Walter Russell answered. "But I should like to get on a gunboat, too," he added.

The day was an extremely hot one in the early part of June, and the *Central*, a large transport of the old-fashioned type, rolled and pitched lazily as she proceeded on her mission of transporting Uncle Sam's soldiers and sailors from San Francisco to Manila. She had on board a regiment of infantry from a northwestern state, a troop of regular cavalry, and about two hundred sailors, some newly enlisted men, and others transferred from the Atlantic Squadron, all bound for the seat of the Filipino rebellion.

Among the sailors transferred from the Atlantic Squadron to Manila Bay were Walter Russell and

his old Yankee chum, Si Doring. As Walter had written to Ben and Larry, he could not stand it to remain idle while so much that was stirring was going on in the Philippines, and he had applied several times for a transfer, the last time with success, through the aid of his firm friend, Caleb Walton, the gunner.

The *Central*, a double-decked tramp steamer, formerly in the Australian trade, had left San Francisco about seven weeks before. The weather had been all that could be hoped for, and the run to Honolulu of the Hawaiian Islands had taken place quickly and without special incident. At Honolulu Walter had had a brief run ashore, and, in company with Si, had taken a stage trip to the Pali, that wonderful precipice overlooking the Pacific, where Larry was first introduced to my readers, in "Under Dewey at Manila." At the Pali, Walter met the inn-keeper, Ralph Harmon, who was much pleased to hear from Larry again, and equally pleased to learn that the young sailor was doing so well.

From Honolulu the run had been straight for the Ladrones, with a brief stop at the little island of Guam, now another of Uncle Sam's new posses-

sions. Here some fresh water was taken on board, and a few extra soldiers set down, and then the *Central* sailed for Manila.

But now the rainy season was on, and this meant frequent storms on the ocean, and the progress of the transport was much delayed. When it did not rain, the air was suffocating, and more than one case of tropical fever broke out on board. Once it looked as if Si would be taken down, and Walter was very much worried. But the constitution of the Yankee lad was a strong one, and he soon threw off the malady.

"But it was a close shave fer yours truly," said Si, when he was around once more. "Don't want another sech, not me!"

"I guess we'll have to be careful of what we eat and drink when we get to the Philippines," said Walter. "Ben wrote to me that he had to be very careful. He said one of the men in his company almost died from eating half-green plantains."

"I never could go half-green stuff, Walter. But there ought to be lots of good things to eat here —if it's like Cuba, and I reckon it is."

"Well, we'll know about that when we get

ashore. Oh, how I would like a good run on land!"

The days passed so slowly that soldiers and sailors devised all sorts of amusements with which to while away the hours. They got up walking and running matches, high jumping, and dancing contests, and played quoits, cards, checkers, and a hundred and one other games. At times both soldiers and sailors had drills and rifle practice, similar to those described in "Under Otis in the Philippines." At the stern somebody was always fishing, although catches were by no means frequent, for the reason that the *Central* moved too swiftly for the sluggish aquatic creatures of the tropics.

"Do you know, I'd like to catch a shark," remarked Si, one day. He was one of the steady fishermen, but so far had caught nothing worth mentioning.

"You don't want much," laughed Walter. "Why don't you try for a whale and be done with it?"

Si had an extra heavy line, procured from a sailor belonging to the transport, and on the day following this talk he baited up with the best piece of bloody meat he could procure, — a piece taken from a sheep which had just been slaughtered for the officers'

table, — and went fishing again, this time at the stern of the lower deck, at a point where there was a slight rise near the rail. It was a cloudy day, and as he had had no luck on clear days, the Yankee lad thought that this might prove better.

Walter had procured a book — one of Captain Marryat's novels — from the ship's library, and sitting close at hand, he was soon deeply absorbed in the story, which was one of life in the British navy. Si fished on in silence for nearly half an hour, then heaved a long sigh.

"Don't believe there's anything in this here ocean," he declared. "Ain't got so much as a nibble!" And he drew down his thin face in disgust.

"Don't get discouraged, Si," returned Walter, looking up for the moment. "Remember the old saying, 'Everything comes to him who waits.'"

"That may be true, but I ain't goin' to die waitin' for no blamed shrimp to tie fast to my line and eat up that bait. I'd rather give the meat to the ship's dog."

Nevertheless, Si prepared to throw out again, after seeing that the bait was still intact and fixed as he wished it. But his cast was bad, and his line caught

on the under planking of the transport's side. In order to loosen the line he had to lean far over the rail until he was almost on the point of losing his balance.

"Be careful, Si —" began Walter on glancing up, when of a sudden something occurred which filled him with dismay. A fin flashed in the water, the bait was swallowed, and the line straightened out with a jerk. The inner end of the line was around Si's hand, and in an instant the Yankee lad spun overboard and disappeared beneath the bosom of the ocean!

"Help!" cried Walter, leaping up. "Man overboard! Help!"

"What's that?" cried an officer standing near, and then as he took in the situation he called to another officer to stop the transport, which was done as speedily as possible.

Although startled, Walter kept his wits about him and looked around for a life-preserver. None was near at hand, and he had to run along the deck for a distance of twenty-five feet in order to obtain one. With this in hand, he sped back to the rear rail, hoping to see his chum on the top of the water once again.

But to his horror, Si was nowhere to be seen. In vain he strained his eyes; the Yankee lad was gone —swallowed up in the foaming wake of the transport, which had now come to a standstill.

"I don't see him!" gasped the young sailor. "Do you?"

"I do not," answered the officer. "Did he get a bite?"

"I believe he did."

"Then maybe the fish has taken the bait and him too. Some of the fish out here are regular man-eaters."

By this time the captain of the transport was at hand, along with a crowd who had heard the commotion, and an order was given to lower one of the small boats.

"Can I go in the boat, captain?" asked Walter. "He was my chum."

The captain looked into Walter's pleading face. "All right; jump in and be quick about it. Like enough the poor chap has run afoul of a shark."

"But the shark didn't come up to the surface."

"Humph! Well, it might have been something else. Come," and in a moment more Walter was in a jollyboat, along with five others, four with oars,

who rowed with might and main for the spot where Si had gone down.

"See anything?" asked the youth, after the sailors had been rowing for several minutes.

"Not a thing," replied the officer, who stood up in the bow of the boat.

"But he must be somewhere about," was the half-desperate return. And then Walter added quickly, "What is that, over to the left?"

"It's the young fellow!" cried the officer.

"Help! help!" came faintly from Si.

"We're coming! Keep up!" shouted back Walter.

"Help! I can't keep up!" was the gasping return, and then Si went under again as quickly as he had appeared.

"I know what's the matter," ejaculated the officer in charge of the boat. "He's fast to that line, and his game is dragging him around." And in this surmise he was correct. Poor Si was practically a prisoner, and it looked as if he would be drowned before aid could reach him.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF SI'S ADVENTURE

"I WONDER why he doesn't cut himself loose?" observed Walter, as the sailors pulled with might and main for the spot where the unfortunate Yankee lad had last been seen.

"I reckon he's too bewildered to think of it," replied the officer. But in this he was mistaken; Si had tried to cut the fishline, but in his haste the pocket-knife had slipped from his grasp and sunk from sight. He had also tried to break the line, but it was both heavy and new, and the effort only made the cord cut into the wrist, around which it had become entangled in a most unexpected manner.

The fish at the hook, which was an albacore, or what is commonly called in Atlantic waters a tunny, was a powerful one, and kept the line taut at all times, even when swinging in somewhat of a semi-circle. To haul back was out of the question,

and so Si had to go along whether he would or not.

"I'm a goner, sure!" thought the boy, dismally. "This fish is going to carry me right down to the bottom!" But the fish did nothing of the sort. Instead, it kept close to the surface, so that Si got an occasional chance to catch his breath, although obtaining by no means all the air he wanted.

When the youth came up and caught sight of the small boat coming to rescue him, his hope revived. But only for a moment, for instantly the fish whirled around and began to carry him further off than ever.

"I've got to git loose of that line somehow!' said Si to himself, and began to work nervously with his disengaged hand. But as all know, a wet line is much harder to untie than a dry one, and it seemed to the boy that the knot grew tighter each instant.

Suddenly the fish took a new tack. For a brief spell the line loosened, then came a jerk which almost took Si's arm out by the socket, and on went the aquatic creature at a madder rate of speed than ever.

The course was now under water for a long time

and the poor boy felt that his last moment in life was at hand. He wanted to breathe, and at last, unable to stand it longer, opened his mouth and gulped in the sea water. Then his head began to swim around, strange lights flashed before his eyes, and he lapsed into unconsciousness. He felt a second loosening of the line, followed by another tremendous jerk and a snap, and then knew no more.

On and on came the jollyboat, those aboard hardly knowing in what direction to head. Walter's eyes were cast to the right, and the officer's to the left.

"There! there!" cried the young sailor at length. "To the right, and be quick, or he will go down again!"

The rowboat was swung around with all possible speed and the rowers bent lustily to their task. Up went the boat on the top of one billow and then down and down in front of that to follow. Walter continued on the watch, and in his hand he held his pocket-knife, wide open and ready for use, should it be required.

Si had gone down twice when the boat came within a furlong of him. Now his body turned and began to sink again. Walter saw the drawn, half-lifeless face, and the sight chilled him to the very soul. Like

a flash he was overboard and swimming to his chum with all haste. But he could not reach him and had to dive.

"Foolish boy!" cried the officer in charge. "He'll be drowned, too. Cease rowing, men, or you'll run into one or the other of them." And the sailors lay to, watching for the reappearance of the pair.

As Si went down for a third time, Walter caught him by the foot. He pulled hard and soon had his chum in his arms. He noticed that the line was now loose, having snapped a few feet away from the young fisherman's wrist.

"This way!" he cried, as he came up. "Don't hit us!"

"All right," answered the officer, and slowly the rowboat came up beside them. "Is he free of the line?"

"Yes."

"Good! Here, pass him this way. That's it. Now climb in yourself. By the look of him, I reckon you went after him in the nick of time."

It was no light task to enter the jollyboat in such a sea, and one of the sailors had to give Walter a hand aboard. "He isn't dead, is he?" was the eager question.

"I think not, lad. But he's had a close call." The officer turned to the rowers. "Back to the ship, boys, and waste no time. This is a case for the surgeons now."

Once at the side of the transport, Si was hoisted on board without delay and placed in charge of the chief surgeon and his assistants. The medical men rolled him over and over and held him up by the feet, bringing forth a large quantity of the ocean brine which he had swallowed. Then they worked his arms, to induce respiration, and at last they had the satisfaction of seeing him give a faint gasp.

"He'll live," said the chief surgeon. "But had he remained in the water a minute longer, it would have been all up with him."

"This settles fishing from the rail," said the captain of the transport. "I want to deliver everybody safe and sound at Manila if I can."

"I guess nobody will want to fish after this," put in the officer of the deck; and in this he was right: not a single line was thrown over for the balance of the trip.

It was Walter who nursed Si that night and the best part of the next day. Fortunately the recovery of the Yankee lad was rapid. But the remembrance

of his experience with the strange fish made him shudder.

"I don't know what it was," he said. "But it was as powerful a fish as I ever struck, and I've struck a good many — off the coast o' Maine and on the Penobscot. He meant business, and if that line hadn't a-broke, I reckon he would have carried me fer miles and miles." Then he caught Walter's hand and gave it a tight squeeze. "I shan't forget what you've done fer me, old chap — it was so like you, too!" And a look passed between them that meant a good deal.

On the next morning it was plain to be seen that a storm was brewing, and as the transport was now close to Point Engano, on the northern coast of Luzon, and there were many small islands and dangerous reefs in the vicinity, a strict watch was kept and the *Central* was put under a reduced headway. Soon the wind was blowing little short of a gale, and from a distance came flashes of lightning and long-rolling claps of thunder.

"We are next to a storm now," remarked Walter, as he came to Si. "You ought to be on deck to see the waves. They are running mountain high."

"I'll be around by to-morrow, Walter. Are we in sight of land yet?"

"No, but one of the officers told me that Point Engano could not be far off. They have set a double lookout."

"I see the *Central* is pitching putty well. I thought I was going out of the bunk a minute ago," and Si braced himself against a corner post. "How dark it is growing!"

"The mainland is to the south of us, and there are a number of small islands to the north. It seems to me this would be a good place to get wrecked in."

Soon the hurricane — for it was nothing less — was upon them in all its grand fury. The wind whistled over the decks of the transport, rattling the windows and sweeping many loose objects overboard. All around, the ocean was whipped up into a milky-white foam, into which the ship plunged and heaved, creaking and groaning dismally. She was by no means a first-class craft and had been pressed into service only because of the urgency of the demand for a transport just at the time she had been in harbor at the Golden Gate, waiting for any cargo which could be picked up.

Soon the lightning came closer, lighting up the steerage, where the jackies bunked, with its vivid flashes, accentuating the gloom that followed. The

pitching of the ship became more violent than before, and those on board had to hold fast or else run the risk of having their brains dashed out by being thrown headlong. Below everything was topsy-turvy, and even the old tars admitted that they had never experienced such a "choppy" storm before.

"Beats anything I ever saw," said one old fellow, who had been a gunner in the navy for fifteen years. "It's worse nor going around Cape Horn or meeting a bender on the Indian Ocean. We'll be doin' well to come out bottom side up." And several equally old sea-dogs agreed with him.

The storm continued, and at noon only a cold lunch could be served, for cooking was out of the question. The transport was running at less than a six-knot rate, and the captain was half of a mind to turn back, knowing that he must be close to shore or to some of the hidden reefs, only a few of which were located on the charts; for so far the nautical surveys around the Philippine Islands have been very imperfect.

But if the old hands were sobered by the situation, it would be hard to describe the feelings among the newly enlisted men, especially the soldiers, who knew little or nothing of life on shipboard.

"We'll go to the bottom, sure!" groaned one young fellow, who had come from a prairie farm and had never seen the ocean until he had set sail from San Francisco. "We can't stand this, and I know it. Oh, what wouldn't I give to be home again!" And he sank down on his bunk and covered his face with his hands.

"Rouse up there, Charley," said one of his friends. "Remember, you can die but once, and what's the difference if it's drowning or a Filipino bullet?"

"Oh, don't talk so, please don't, Frank," was the reply. "It's no joke, indeed it isn't!" And so the talking went on between the pair. Walter felt sorry for the prairie boy and presently walked over to give him a word of cheer.

"I don't think we'll go down," he said. "Storms like this are not unusual, and most ships weather them. The storm won't last much longer." And then the volunteer's face brightened a bit, although he was still doubtful. It must be said, however, that all the volunteers were not afraid. The majority of them took the storm, and the violent pitching of the transport, as a joke, and some of them indulged in a vast amount of "horse play" in consequence. One soldier bet another that he

could stand alone on the lower deck and thread a sailor's needle by the light of a flash of lightning, and not only lost all his pocket money by the wager, but also got a bad tumble and ran the needle well into his thumb. Another bet that he could stand alone and balance a plate of soup on his palm for five minutes, and ended by slipping flat and dashing the soup into the face of an officer who happened to be passing. Little short of a row followed, which came to an end when a blinding flash of lightning lit up the ship from end to end. The flash of light was followed by a wild cry from the deck.

"Back ship! We are on the rocks! Back ship, or we are lost!" A grinding and a sickening crash followed, sending a shiver over the transport from stem to stern, and then the *Central* backed with all the strength of her powerful compound engines.

CHAPTER X

A RUN ASHORE, AND WHAT FOLLOWED

"HAVE we struck?" came from Si, as he leaped up from his bunk, his face full of sudden fear.

"We've hit something," returned Walter, who had not understood the cries from the deck owing to the wind.

Another bumping and a grinding followed, and they felt the transport list heavily to port. Si clasped Walter by the shoulder, and in the darkness each braced the other. Were they going to the bottom of the ocean? The question arose in the mind of each, but neither put it into words.

Yells and screams arose, for in a moment of extreme peril men are very much like wild animals, and a mad rush was made for the deck. But hardly had the first man come up than he was ordered under shelter again.

"Keep in, or you'll be hurled overboard," was the advice given. "We have struck a regular cyclone." The words were caught up in the fury

of the whistling wind, which howled and shrieked with the energy of a demon. The rain swept the deck in sheets, and but little could be seen excepting when the lightning flashed across the storm-swept sky.

The minutes to follow were full of alarm for everybody on board. Even the captain could not tell how badly the transport was damaged or how close the ship was to running on another hidden reef.

"Make an examination and report at once," was the order passed to the ship's carpenter, and then the water well was sounded. It gave six inches of water in the bow compartment.

The *Central* continued to back, but when an attempt was made to bring her around, the wind struck her broadside so heavily that she nearly keeled over. The force of the elements had broken open the doors of the upper cabin, and the things flying through the air had smashed in a score of windows. The crashing of glass and the banging of furniture added to the confusion, and soldiers and jackies ran from one spot to another not knowing what to do. On the companionway there was a jam, and several went down, one man to be extricated from the crowd later on with a broken arm,

and another with three ribs crushed in. This experience on the *Central* is one which many volunteers and regulars will not forget as long as they live.

At last the wind appeared to abate a trifle, and then the transport turned in a semicircle and came up to head it. In such a storm it was foolhardy to remain near the coast, and accordingly they ran due east, whence they had come.

When the carpenter came up, he announced a severe straining of half a dozen planks, but no serious damage. The water still continued to come in, yet not so swiftly but that the donkey engine attached to the hose took care of it with ease.

The night to follow seemed unusually long, but with the coming of the day the hurricane was a thing of the past, and by eight o'clock the sun was pouring down its rays as clearly and fiercely as ever. The ocean still rolled in regular hills of alternate milk and greenish foam, with here and there a choppy sea which sent the spray flying from one end of the deck to the other. The great danger of the storm was over, and everybody was correspondingly thankful.

"I want no more of that sort of thing," observed Walter, when at breakfast.

"Nor I," answered Si. "I reckon that's as bad as the storm Larry and that Luke Striker encountered."

"Just about. But we can be happy that we didn't go overboard as they did."

"These storms seem to be so much worse than those we have on the Atlantic."

"Well, I don't know about that, Si. They have 'em pretty rough around the West Indies and off the coast of Hatteras."

Toward nightfall the transport came in sight of Luzon, at a point not far distant from the cape they were expecting to round. Here there was a beautiful little bay, with water as clear as crystal.

"That is pretty, isn't it?" observed Walter, and then, as he gazed at the hill beyond, covered with its tropical growth of many colors, he added: "I'd like to take a run ashore there, if only for quarter of an hour."

"So would I," answered his chum. "But what's the use o' wishing, Walter?" he went on. "We're booked for Manila, and we won't stop anywhere else."

But Si was mistaken. The ship's carpenter had now announced to the captain that the damage done was growing greater, and that the transport had better

lay-to for a few hours for repairs. The chart was examined and the bay found sufficiently deep, so the *Central* entered it and dropped anchor fifty yards from the beach.

At once the men began to beg to go ashore. All put in a claim at the same time. But it was manifestly impossible that fourteen hundred and thirty men could go ashore in a few small boats in the short time allowed, and so soldiers and sailors were told to draw lots, the lucky ones being limited to just one hundred.

"Hurrah, I'm to go!" cried Si, after trying his luck, and then, as he saw Walter's face fall he added, in a whisper: "I don't care much, and if you draw a blank you can go in my place."

"No, I won't cut off your pleasure," said Walter, and then tried his own luck. "I'm with you, Si!" he cried enthusiastically. "Come, let's get in the first boat." And off they rushed. But the first boat was already full, and they had to wait for the second. Soon the happy crowd on board were landed, and the small craft went back for others of the lucky ones.

Previous to letting the men disembark, those in command of the transport had examined the shore carefully through their glasses without seeing a trace

of any natives, hostile or otherwise, so the brief outing was considered absolutely safe. The men were told not to go out of sight or hearing of each other and to keep within gun sound of the ship.

"I don't believe we'll see any of the rebels away up here," said Walter, as he and Si ran along the beach and to the nearest patch of grass. "We are miles and miles away from where they have been battling, and the chances are the natives in this neighborhood know little or nothing of the war."

"Well, I wouldn't be too sure o' thet, Walter. These Filipinos have good runners, even if they ain't got telegraph lines, and the word is bound to be passed around sooner or later. We had better keep our eyes peeled."

"Oh, of course we'll watch out, Si, and I intend to keep my pistol where it will be handy."

The two walked along the beach in company with a number of others, and then began to ascend the hill leading up from the water. Here the rocks were numerous and the shrubbery thick, but the exertion seemed to do them good. At last they stood on the top of the hill and from this point could obtain a view of several miles around.

"What a beautiful island!" was Walter's com-

ment. "How rich the foliage is and what a gay coloring."

"I see some cocoanuts," said Si. "Wonder if they are good to eat?"

"We might try them, if we can reach them," returned Walter, and then they began to fling stones at the nuts, since the trees appeared to be too tall and straight to be ascended. It was great sport after having been boxed up so long on shipboard, and when Si at last brought one of the nuts down, both shouted in glee. Walter kept on throwing until he, too, brought down a prize, and thus they kept the sport up without paying attention to the others of the party who had come in that direction, and these men gradually passed out of sight and hearing.

"Now I'm going to see what's in this nut," said Si, placing the object on a flat rock. He hammered away vigorously and presently the nut cracked into a dozen or more pieces. But alas! the meat inside was wormy and sour, being far over-ripe.

"Fooled!" said Si, dolefully. "Try yours." And Walter did so, with a result equally disappointing.

"I don't believe they are all that way," said Walter. "Let us see if we can't bring down some good ones." And then they began throwing once more,

keeping up the fusillade until their arms ached. Six other cocoanuts were brought down, one hitting Walter on the shoulder with such force that it lamed him. But the new lot of nuts were as bad as the old.

"Sold," sighed Si. "And I had my mouth all set for a big, sweet piece, too."

"Where are the others?" burst out Walter, suddenly. "I don't see them anywhere."

"They can't be far off," answered his chum. "Come, I think they went in this direction."

"That direction? You mean in this direction." And Walter pointed in a directly opposite way.

"No, I mean this way."

"I'm sure they didn't go that way, Si. The last I saw of them, Branwood was passing that rock."

"And the last I saw of them, Carrington was passing that clump of bushes," returned Si, very soberly. "We can't both be right."

"That's true, and I think —"

"That you are right, o' course —" Si gave a short laugh.

"And you think you are right, Si Doring."

"Exactly, and why shouldn't I? My eyesight is jest as good as yours, ain't it?" The Yankee boy

paused for a moment. "But don't let us quarrel over it, Walter. It's too serious. If we can't find the crowd, we had better make tracks for the shore. As soon as we spot the ship we'll be O. K."

"All right; the shore it is, then. But in which direction is the shore, according to your notion?" And Walter gazed at Si dubiously.

"That way." And the Yankee lad pointed with his long finger.

"This time I agree with you. Come." And side by side they started down the hill, but at a different point from where they had ascended. A hundred yards were covered when they found themselves in an undergrowth so dense that further progress was impossible.

"We missed it this trip, that's certain," said Walter, with a deep sigh. "We'll have to go back."

"All right, then, we'll go back," grumbled Si. He was still disappointed over the cocoanuts. "Wonder if we can't find the trail we left when we came up?"

They went back to the trees and began a hunt for the trail. Here and there they found footprints, but nothing definite enough to follow. Then they

tried a new way to the shore, along a tiny mountain stream, which bubbled and dashed over a series of moss-grown rocks.

The stream led around the edge of a small cliff, and here the undergrowth was as thick as that before encountered. But what surprised the lads more than anything was the sight of a nipa hut, set up against the cliff.

"Hullo, a hut!" cried Walter.

"Sure enough," responded his chum. "Wonder if any of the people who live here are around? If they are, we might — Oh!"

Si got no further, for at that instant he found himself gripped tightly from behind. Walter was also seized, and a second later both of the boys were hurled flat on their faces. They tried to rise, and each started to give the alarm, but then several war-clubs were flourished in the air over them, they saw dark and ferocious faces thrust close to their own, and then followed several telling blows which speedily rendered them insensible.

CHAPTER XI

FOLLOWED BY NEGRITOS

When Walter came to his senses he found himself in utter darkness. His head ached as if it would split open, and there were sharp, shooting pains down his back. He lay on a dirt flooring, and his hands and feet were tightly bound with ropes made of tough tropical vines.

"Where in the world am I? How did I come here?" Such were the first questions which he asked himself. He thought of the awful storm and of how he and Si had been pitched around. Was this the end of that adventure and was he in some cave at the bottom of the ocean?

A memory of those ferocious-looking faces so close to his own aroused him, and then he remembered how he had been seized and thrown down, and he gave a deep shudder. He was in the hands of the enemy!

"A prisoner!" he groaned, half aloud. "And

they have put me in this place, which must be some sort of cave! What will they do next?"

A deep groan from a short distance away reached his ears and caused him to listen intently. Presently the groan was repeated.

"Si! Si!" he called. "Si, is that you?"

At first there was no answer. Then the Yankee's voice was raised in pitiful pleading: "Don't hit me again! Please don't hit me!"

"Si!" continued Walter. "Si! They are not hitting you any more. Rouse up!"

Another groan from Si, followed by words Walter could not understand. At last the Yankee lad aroused himself.

"Why — er — what in thunder has happened to me?" he cried. "Oh, my head!"

"Si!"

"Walter! Where are you?"

"Over here, bound hands and feet."

"So am I bound. My, but didn't those villains do us up for keeps?"

"They certainly did."

"What are we to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Have you any idea how long it's been since we were made prisoners?"

"Not the slightest."

A pause followed, and during that time Walter managed to roll over and over until he bumped up against his chum. Si lay close to a rocky wall, which proved that they were in a cave.

"We must get free, and that quickly," continued Walter. "For all we know our ship has already sailed."

"Don't say that, Walter, don't! They wouldn't be mean enough to desert us, would they?"

"I don't know. One thing is certain, though: they couldn't afford to stay here very long looking for us. The orders were to proceed to Manila as quickly as possible. We only dropped anchor in the bay because it was absolutely necessary."

"Well, if we were free, we might do something. Can you untie my hands if I back up to you?"

"I can try," replied Walter.

Without delay the Yankee lad turned over and brought his wrists to where Walter could easily touch them. It was no easy job to unloosen the twisted vines, and Walter's nails were much broken over the task. But at last he succeeded in freeing his chum.

"Good for you," said Si. "Now I'll do as much

for you," and he did. Then the bonds were taken from their feet, and each arose slowly, with more than one groan which seemed impossible to suppress. Si had a severe cut over his left ear, and from this the blood had flowed over his cheek. Walter was not cut, but there was a lump on his temple as large as a chicken egg. All their weapons had been taken from them.

"If we had a light," said Si, "we might get out easily. Have you a match?"

"No."

"No more have I, wuss luck. Well, come on, but be careful you don't knock your head off on some overhanging rock."

Not caring to become separated in that Stygian darkness, they moved forward side by side, each with his hands extended.

"Water!" cried Walter, a minute later, and came to a halt. They had chanced upon a tiny stream.

"That's all right," said Si. "We can get a drink first and then wash our hurts." And this they proceeded to do without delay.

"This stream must lead somewhere," went on Walter. "Let us follow it. Perhaps it will bring us to the sea."

"Jest the thing, Walter. But don't make sech a noise. Them natives may not be far off."

The stream was not over a foot deep and less than a yard wide, and they followed it with ease, around a series of rocks and then through some brushwood into the open air. Here they found themselves in a deep ravine, a veritable split in the hills, with a jungle upon either side and the twinkling stars shining far overhead.

"It must be about the middle of the night," remarked the Yankee youth. "I reckon we'll do well if we strike the shore afore morning. If the ship—"

"Hush!" came in warning from Walter, and he clapped his hand over his chum's mouth. He had caught sight of a camp-fire smouldering at a distance, and he pointed it out.

"Whose do you suppose it is?" whispered Si.

"The natives', most likely."

"Perhaps it's some friends from the transport."

"Possibly, but I don't think so."

"Let us git a bit closer and investigate, Walter."

Making the least possible noise, they drew closer to the camp-fire, which had died down until about ready to go out. Although they gazed in all directions about the spot, not a human being was to be

He made out the dim forms of several men Page 109

seen. Evidently the camp had been deserted hours before.

"I don't see anybody," whispered Walter.

"Nor I. Let us go on." And the journey down the tiny stream was resumed. Soon they came to a little waterfall, and here it was with difficulty that they let themselves down the rocks for a distance of fifteen feet or more. When almost to the bottom, poor Si slipped and landed in a thorn bush.

"Wow!" he cried. "O dear me! I'm bein' stuck to death! Save me!" Walter ran to his aid, but it was not until Si's trousers had been torn in several places that he was released from his unpleasant situation.

"You've made a good deal of noise," said Walter, quickly. "We had better get along, or the natives will be following us." And they started off at an increased rate of speed. But the path was uncertain, and before he knew it, Walter pitched headlong into a wet hole.

"Hullo, you're as bad as me," cried Si, and started to help Walter up, when he heard a savage cry, coming from the top of the ravine, on their left. Looking in the direction, he made out the dim forms of several men, evidently natives, for each flourished a war-club.

"The Filipinos!" burst out Walter, as he, too, saw the enemy. "Run, Si, run, before it is too late!" Hand in hand they sped down the side of the mountain stream, over rocks and through the brush. Often they plunged into the water, and once Walter fell flat, wetting himself from head to feet. But still they kept on, until both were winded.

"I — I can't go on no further nohow!" gasped the Yankee youth. "I'm tuckered out. Go on an' save yourself." And he staggered up against a near-by tree.

"We must go on, Si — we simply must!" insisted Walter. "Come, perhaps we'll find some place where we can hide."

Thus urged, the Yankee boy essayed to go on. But his breath came short and painful, and he staggered as if ready to go down at each instant.

In the meantime the natives were drawing closer, and several of them had leaped down into the ravine and were coming up in the immediate rear. One stopped to shoot an arrow at them, but the shaft flew wide of its mark in the semi-darkness.

Seeing that Si could go but a little further at the most, Walter strained his eyes to catch sight of some spot where they might hide. The ravine was widen-

ing out, and not far away was a jungle of tropical trees and heavy undergrowth. Thither he led the way.

"Let us lose ourselves in the jungle; it's our only chance," he whispered, and gripped Si by the arm to steady him. But the Yankee youth could no longer stand, — being still weak from his fishing adventure as well as from the way he had been handled by the Filipinos, — and he sank down in a state of utter collapse.

Walter was in a quandary. Should he desert his friend and go on? It seemed the only thing to do in order to save himself. But a glance at his chum made him grit his teeth. No, he would save Si or be captured with him.

The load was a heavy one, but the excitement of the moment gave Walter strength, and throwing his chum over his shoulder like a sack of flour, he plunged boldly into the jungle. Fortunately the vines were not numerous at this locality, so they did not stay his progress. The bushes scratched his face and hands, but to this he paid no attention. His sole thought was to put distance between himself and the enemy. On and on and still on he went, his knees trembling beneath his heavy load and

his breath coming in sharp gasps. At last, unable to go another step, he sank down in the midst of some brushwood, let Si slide from his shoulder, and went off in a temporary faint for the want of breath.

The natives had seen them enter the jungle and now started in pursuit. But underneath the dense trees it was totally dark and soon they had to come to a halt. Torches were lit, and they set about finding the trail of the *Americanos*. They were Negritos — the native name for Little Blacks — belonging to that tribe which inhabits nearly the entire northern portion of Luzon. They were small in stature, thin and bony, with high cheek bones and faces which were peculiarly cold and bloodthirsty. This tribe of Negritos number about twenty-five thousand, and they have been aptly called by students of ethnology the primitive men of the Philippines. In intelligence they are not above the better-known Australian bushmen. That they were at one time cannibals has been settled beyond a doubt.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE ON THE BEACH

As soon as they had recovered somewhat from the exertions of their flight, the two young sailors listened with strained ears for some sound from the enemy who had been pursuing them.

"I don't hear a thing," whispered Si, presently. "Do you?"

"I hear something — a good way off," replied Walter. "I think it is coming closer."

Again they strained their ears. Walter had not been mistaken, for now they heard the breaking of brushwood quite plainly. Slowly but surely the sounds were coming closer. The Negritos had provided themselves with torches and were following up the trail with all the skill of dogs in the chase.

"We can't escape them," muttered Si. "If only we had our pistols, or even our cutlasses!"

"Let us move on again," said Walter. "We may be able to throw them off sooner or later."

They arose, and fairly shaking with exhaustion, managed to crawl on for a hundred feet or less. Then they came upon a hollow partly filled with water. At one end of the pool was another mountain stream.

"Into the water," said Walter, quickly. "Remember, that leaves no trail." And in they plunged, with as little noise as possible, and moved from the pool to the stream and then continued their journey to where there was a small wall of rocks. Up the wall they clambered, and threw themselves flat in some high grass, worming their way out of sight like a couple of snakes. Then they grew quiet again, hardly daring to breathe.

With torches waving in the air, the natives reached the pool and came to a halt on its banks. As Walter had said, water leaves no trail, and loud were the grunts of disgust which the Negritos uttered as they ranged around the spot, inspecting every foot of the bank with care. At last, feeling certain that the *Americanos* had not gone deeper into the forest, they moved down the stream.

Walter and Si heard them coming, and the hearts of the young tars thumped violently beneath their jackets. To run farther was out of the question.

All they could do was to remain quiet, trusting to Providence that they would not be discovered.

Soon the Negritos were directly opposite to where the pair were in hiding. Walter was so agitated he was afraid they would hear the pumping of his heart. Each boy clutched the hand of the other in a death-like grip. The natives came to a halt within a rod of them.

Not a word of what was said could either Walter or Si understand, nor did they see the Negritos, although the glare of the torches was plainly visible over their heads, throwing fantastic shadows over the foliage of the jungle behind them. The natives were holding a consultation, and one leaned against the very rocks the youths had mounted so short a time before. Walter and Si were afraid the fellow would climb up for a view of the locality, and prepared to make a last run, if their legs would carry them, but the necessity for this did not arise. The natives moved on, and the boys were left to themselves.

"Gone," whispered Walter, as the footsteps and the glare of the torches died away in the distance. "Thank God!"

"If only they don't come back," came from the

Yankee lad. "We ain't out of the woods yet, not by a jugful."

"Let us move back, among the trees, Si. Perhaps we can climb into one that has low branches."

This advice was followed, and once in the trees the boys again listened with "all ears," as the saying is. But the natives did not come back, and they were not disturbed.

Each was exhausted, mentally and physically, yet sleep was out of the question; and as the night wore along they conversed in whispers, speculating upon what would be best to do with the coming of daylight, and if the *Central* was still at anchor in the bay, awaiting their return.

"I am afraid of one of two things," said Walter. "Either the transport has left or else those natives carried us a long way inland before they placed us in that cave."

"How do you make that out?" asked Si.

"Because of the noise they have made and the lights. If we were close to the shore, and the *Central* was still in the harbor, they would be more careful, being afraid some party would be out on the hunt for us."

"By ginger, Walter, that looks about right!

But I don't think the transport would leave so quick. They must have carried us a long way after batting us over the head with their clubs. And if that's so, then we are still a good distance from the coast," added Si, ruefully.

They decided that, with the coming of daylight, they would climb a tall tree and do their best to "get the lay o' the land," as Si expressed it. If the bay and the ship were anywhere in sight, they would make a beeline thence, keeping their eyes wide open for any natives who might be watching for them.

"And if the ship isn't in sight — " said Walter. He did not finish, and Si's only answer was a sad shake of the head. If the transport was gone, there was no telling what they would do.

So tired they could scarcely keep their eyes open, and yet so nervous that even a nap was out of the question, the chums waited for the coming of daylight. The jungle had been very quiet, but toward morning the birds began to tune up, and soon numerous insects joined in, followed by the shrill cry of parrots.

With the first sign of daylight they aroused themselves and hunted up a tall tree — a species of giant

palm. Both had learned the sailor's trick of climbing by means of a rope slung around the tree and one's waist, and in this instance each used some heavy vines and was soon among the lofty branches.

"What do you see?" asked Walter, who was below his companion.

"Can't see much of anything, yet," answered the Yankee lad. "There seems to be a mist around us. We'll have to wait till the sun comes up." And they did wait, with all the patience they could muster. Presently the round, red sun came out of the bed of the Pacific, like a globe of fire, sending long shafts of wavering light over the billows, and tipping the tops of the trees, and then the bushes lower down. They were in sight of the sea, and that was one comfort.

"The ship — where is our ship?" asked Walter, impatiently. Not a sail of any kind was visible. Their hearts dropped in their bosoms like lumps of lead.

"Deserted —" began Si, and then gave another look to seaward. "Walter, we've made a mistake. That bay yonder is not the one at which we landed. We must be to the eastward of the cape."

"Then where is the other bay? further westward?"

"Yes. We'll have to try another tree, or work our way to the other side of this hill. Come." And they lost no time in descending to the ground.

Both were tremendously hungry, but there was nothing at hand with which to satisfy the cravings of their stomachs, and neither was inclined to waste time in hunting something up. "The ship — let us get back to that, and we'll have all we want to eat," said Walter, and Si agreed with him.

To work their way around the hillside was not easy, for here the long and entangling vines were again in evidence, while at some points the undergrowth was so thick they could not see a dozen feet in front of them.

"This must be like the jungles Ben mentioned in his letter," said Walter. "He told me they were ten times worse than those in Cuba, and he is right. An army couldn't get through a mile of this in a week."

"How far do you reckon we are from the battlefields he mentioned?"

"Oh, a good many miles, Si — probably over two hundred."

"Those rascals didn't look like much of fighters — I mean soldiers."

"No, they looked more like savage negroes."

"But we don't want to fall into their hands. They mean business, — or they wouldn't have attacked us as they did and made us prisoners."

So the conversation ran on, until, an hour later, Si proposed they mount another tree. This was not difficult, for all of the trees in that vicinity were well provided with low-drooping branches. Up they went to the top, and Walter, who was now ahead, gave a subdued shout of joy.

"The ship!"

"Sure?" queried Si, and pushed up beside him. "You are right, and the sooner we get to her, the better."

They had reached a point where they could see far to the northwest of their former position. Here was the beautiful bay where they had come ashore, and there lay the *Central* at anchor, as peacefully as ever. The sight of the transport was to them like a sight of home.

"How far off do you think she is?" began Walter, when a number of shots rang out, cutting short his question. The shots came from the woods fronting the bay, and soon they saw the smoke rising among the trees. Then out on the beach ran a number of

soldiers, and waved their arms wildly toward the ship.

"Our men!" gasped Si. "And them infernal savages air a-followin' o' 'em!" He was greatly excited, and this caused him to drop back to his old-time dialect.

"You are right!" burst from Walter's lips. "Six, eight, nine of them! They are having a hot time of it. Do you suppose they have been ashore looking for us?"

"More'n likely. See, they are firing again,— and there come the savages, two or three dozen strong. What can it mean?"

Neither knew, and breathlessly they watched the contest from afar. The soldiers emptied their weapons as rapidly as ever, while the Negritos sent volley after volley into their ranks, killing one man and wounding two others.

A small boat was now seen to put off from the transport, filled with soldiers, who began to shoot as they advanced. A gun on the *Central* was also brought to bear on the natives, and the low boom of the weapon echoed and reëchoed across the hills behind the two boys who watched the battle so eagerly. The cannon shot brought down several

Negritos, and for the minute the rest were paralyzed with fear and ran for the shelter of the trees.

"Good!" shouted Si, enthusiastically. "Give it to the beggars! Wipe 'em out!" And his face beamed with pleasure.

But the natives were not yet beaten, and as the boat from the transport touched the beach, a larger band than before dashed out on the sands, and a fierce hand-to-hand encounter ensued, in which several on both sides went down. But finally the Negritos were beaten back, up the beach, and then another shot from the ship, followed by a shell, put them to flight. By this time the Americans had had enough of the encounter, and all made a rush for the boat, carrying the wounded with them. Some could not get aboard, but had to hold on to the gunwale, and thus the rowboat put off for the ship.

No sooner had the boat left the shore than the natives came out a third time, and arrow after arrow was sent after the craft, but with uncertain results. Soon, however, the rowboat was out of range, and then more shots from the ship caused a wild scamper of the Negritos to shelter.

CHAPTER XIII

HUNTING UP A SUPPER

"THAT'S a sort of a drawn battle," remarked Walter, as they watched the soldiers clambering aboard the transport.

"Looks to me like we had the worst of it," answered Si. "But the question is, what are we to do? We want to jine the ship, but how can we with those rascals all around the shore of the bay?"

Walter's face fell. "I never thought of that, Si! But we must get on board somehow."

"I agree with you, but how?"

"I don't know."

"We might wait till nightfall and try sneaking aboard in the dark, if —"

"If the ship doesn't leave in the meantime." Walter's heart began to beat rapidly. "Si, do you think they will leave us?"

"They may think us dead — shot down by those rascals with their silent arrows. They have killed two or three of our men already."

"Can't we signal them?"

"That's an idea. I'll fly my shirt to the breeze." And in a jiffy the Yankee lad had the garment off and was waving it frantically with one hand while holding on to the treetop with the other. But if the signal was seen, no answer came back.

Quarter of an hour passed, and the boys waited in the tree, undecided what to do next. If they tried for the shore, both felt they were more than certain to play directly into the hands of the enemy. And yet to remain quiet was maddening.

"Let us go down and move forward, but with every possible caution," was Walter's advice. "If we remain here, we'll surely be left, and I must have something to eat sooner or later."

Si donned his shirt, and they climbed to the ground. They had the location of the bay now well in mind and took as direct a path as the growth of the jungle afforded.

It was a clear day and exceedingly hot, and their exertions soon put both in a dripping perspiration. Yet they pressed on, only stopping at a tiny stream to obtain a drink and wet their throbbing heads.

At last the jungle was passed, and they came

to an opening overgrown with coarse Philippine "cow" grass, three to four feet high and as tough as cornstalks. Beyond this field was the wood skirting the beach of the bay where the *Central* was riding at anchor.

"Let us go around this field," suggested Walter. "We can then come up in an opposite direction to that from which the natives appeared." And Si agreed. But the going around took time, the sun blazed down more fiercely than ever, and both were all but sunstruck in consequence. At the edge of the wood they had to sit down to rest.

Presently a shouting reached their ears, coming from the end of the wood, where one of the mountain streams emptied itself into the bay. To find out what new movement was on foot, they climbed a tall tree growing near, and made out a long canoe, which the Negritos had brought forth from the bushes beside the stream. The canoe was launched in the stream, and fully a score of natives began to push the craft toward the bay.

"They haven't given up the fight yet," whispered Walter. "I believe they are really going to row over to the transport."

"Well, if they do, they'll be blown sky-high," an-

swered Si, and he could not help but chuckle over the idea.

The canoe was scarcely out of sight when another band of the natives appeared and brought forth a second craft, similar to the first. Then came a third, a fourth, and finally a fifth.

"By ginger, this is gettin' powerful interesting; eh, Walter?" Si managed to gasp. "Five on 'em, and each manned by twenty or thirty of the heathins. They mean to attack the transport in earnest."

"But they'll be certain to get the worst of it," replied Walter.

From the position they occupied they could not see the *Central*, and so as quickly as possible they shifted to another. By this time, the canoes were floating in the bay, each loaded with natives armed principally with bows and arrows, although here and there a gun of ancient pattern was to be seen, generally in the hands of a man who was something of a chief.

"There they go for the transport," cried Walter.

"Yes, and there is a first shot to salute them," added Si, as a cannon boomed out. But those in the canoe were on guard, and moved hither and thither so quickly that the shot missed its mark.

Then came several shots from the canoes which filled the boys with surprise.

Among the natives of some parts of the Philippines fire-arrows, as they are termed, are of common use in warfare, and the Negritos were now making use of these. Each arrow sent toward the *Central* had attached to it a bundle of feathers saturated with pitch or with the highly aromatic turpentine of the Malaysian turpentine tree, and all blazing fiercely.

The arrows fell on the deck of the ship, on the superstructure, and caught in the rigging, and in a few minutes some of the well-tarred ropes on board were spurting up into a lively blaze. The fire brigade was called out and set to work, but the burning arrows kept coming in a shower, and several workers were hit with them. Then a cannon shot crashed into one of the canoes and sank it; but the novel bombardment of the Negritos continued.

"They are plucky, no use o' talking," was Si's comment. "Didn't really think they had the nerve."

"Look! look!" almost screamed Walter. "The ship is turning about! She is going to leave the bay!"

"Leave!" ejaculated Si. "Leave us! No! no!"

"It's true! Look for yourself!"

They did look — their eyes staring almost from their sockets. Walter was right; the *Central* had pulled up her anchors, and now the transport was moving slowly out into the broad ocean.

"They are going to desert us!" groaned Walter. "Si, what shall we do?"

"We must try to signal 'em," answered the Yankee lad, and again he started to use his white shirt as a signal; but the ship kept to her course, and in half an hour disappeared around a distant headland.

The feelings of the young sailors can be better imagined than described. *Deserted!* It was the one word to use. Left to their fate on that wild, rocky shore where the natives were known to be their enemies. With blanched faces, each looked at the other — with a heart so full that no words could do justice to the feelings.

The natives followed the transport for a short distance only, then, seeing the folly of trying to catch up with the ship, they let out a ringing yell of defiance and returned to the shore. Soon their long canoes were hauled back up the little river, and the Negritos disappeared from view.

"We might as well get to the ground," said Walter, at last. "There is no use of remaining here any longer."

Si nodded, and they descended quietly, to sit close to the tree trunk, hopeless, and in no humor for talking. They were now more tired than ever, and presently the Yankee lad's head fell forward on his breast and he went to sleep. Seeing this, Walter also began to nod, and it was not long before he followed into the land of merciful dreams.

It was dark when they awoke, a gentle rain sifting through the tree branches having aroused them. Both lay on their backs where they had fallen. Si was the first up, and Walter quickly followed.

"We've been sleeping six or seven hours," remarked the Yankee lad. "Say, but ain't I hungry!"

"So am I, Si, but I don't see much of a prospect of anything to eat."

It was by no means pleasant to sit still in the rain, especially on an empty stomach, and they began to move about, hardly knowing or caring in what direction. Gradually they drifted to the

beach, and coming to the last of the woods peered forth, to find the spot deserted.

"The natives have taken themselves off," began Walter, when a shining object lying not far away caught his eyes. It was a pistol dropped by one of the transport's officers, and quickly he ran and picked it up.

"Is it loaded, Walter?"

The young sailor made an examination. "Four chambers are," he answered.

"Good. Now, if we can only find some game — "

"But a shot would bring those Filipinos down on us, Si."

"Maybe not. Anyway, we've got to risk something, or starve — and I'd rather take the risk, wouldn't you?"

"I was thinking of what Larry did when he and Luke Striker were cast ashore somewhere around here. They found some fish on the beach, which had been cast up by the storm. We may be as lucky, if we look around."

"But how are you going to cook the fish without a fire?"

"We can find some hollow and discharge the pistol into some dry gatherings. That won't make much

noise, and it's certain to give us a light," continued Walter.

With caution they moved along the beach, on the constant lookout for the Negritos. But none of the natives showed himself, — nor did anything in the shape of a fish or other sea food appear.

"We're not so lucky," remarked Si, dolefully. "I can tell you we have either got to go on a hunting expedition or starve. I wish we could strike a bear or something big, because that would last. A bird ain't nothing, and four rounds ain't nothing either — when it comes to feeding two chaps as hollow as we be."

"There are no bears in Luzon, and very few large animals outside of the carabaos, or water buffaloes. And as you say, four rounds ain't much, especially when they are bullets instead of doses of buckshot. But we've got to do the best with what we have," concluded Walter, trying to pluck up a bit of courage.

Satisfied that there was nothing on the beach they could eat, they walked toward the woods, in a direction opposite to that where the mountain stream was located. They were approaching a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean when Walter uttered a sudden cry,

raised the pistol, took careful aim, and fired. A wild fluttering of wings followed, and then a big bird circled around and around their heads, to fall dead at their feet.

"Good shot!" cried Si, as he picked up the game and made certain that life was extinct. "What do you allow it is?"

"A cormorant, Si."

"A cormorant? It don't look like the kind I've seen at home."

"It's the Asiatic variety, I guess. See, he was fishing, just as they all do in every part of the world. I caught him just as he was swallowing his prey, which is stuck in his throat."

"A double haul, Walter. We can now have both fish and fowl for our supper," cried the Yankee lad, enthusiastically. "It's a pity the fish wasn't larger."

"If he had been, the cormorant wouldn't have caught him — unless he was trained to the work."

"Trained?"

"Yes. The Chinese train cormorants to fish for them, and take them out in boats for that purpose. The cormorant sits on the gunwale, and when a fish swims near, darts overboard and hauls him in. He

brings in big and little alike, and after the work is over gets the little fish for his reward."

"By ginger, Walter, that's the worst fish yarn I ever heard."

"It's no yarn, Si; it's the truth, as you can learn for yourself — if ever we get out of this pickle we're in, which looks doubtful."

CHAPTER XIV

A JOURNEY OVER THE SIERRA MADRE

Carrying the cormorant between them, for the bird was as big as a turkey and correspondingly heavy, they lost no time in hurrying from the beach and plunging into the heart of the woods.

"The natives must have heard that shot, if they are within half a mile of the place," said Walter, "and the best we can do is to get out of the neighborhood."

Their walk brought them to a small brook, and following this, they presently reached a hollow where, between two large rocks, there was a spring of pure cold water. There was plenty of shelter at hand, and this they concluded, therefore, to make their temporary camp.

The cormorant was speedily picked and cleaned, and the young sailors tied the bird up in several big leaves, wound with the rope-like vines which were handy. Then a fireplace was made of stones, the

bird placed on the bottom and covered with sand, and they essayed to obtain a light.

"We must get the driest brushwood we can find," said Walter; and this was by no means easy, for the light rain was very penetrating and had wet nearly everything. But at last they had what they wanted, and the pistol was discharged in some lint torn from the inside of Walter's jacket. The flash of the weapon was followed by a tiny blaze which Si nursed with tenderest care, and soon they had a roaring fire, which, however, they kept well hidden by the rocks and by some sods they had torn up. The fire made the hollow fairly dry and comfortable, and the rain kept the smoke well down among the trees, so that it was not likely to be seen.

It was an impatient pair of young tars that waited for the cormorant to be done baking, and Si wanted to get at the meat long before it was finished according to Walter's notion. The little fish had been put beside the bird and both baked together.

"Kind o' tough," said the Yankee lad, when the food was brought forth and cut, or rather, torn up, for they were without a knife. "And tastes kind o' salty, too."

"I believe only the young of the cormorant are

generally eaten," replied Walter. "But we can be thankful to have anything, and I must say for myself that I am so hungry I could almost eat sole leather." And he fell to with a hearty good will on one of the drumsticks, while Si gnawed away at the other. The meal lasted for over an hour, yet when they were done, fully a half of the cormorant remained. The fish was more tender and disappeared like magic.

"We can save this for to-morrow," remarked Si, on finishing the novel repast. And the balance of the bird was wrapped in fresh leaves and rewound with vines.

By this time night was again upon them, and they concluded to remain where they were until daybreak. The fire was replenished, and they huddled in the shelter of the rocks, to watch the blaze and talk over their situation.

"We are in a hole — no two ways about it," was Si's comment. "What to do I don't know. If I thought the *Central* would come back for us, I'd stay right where I am."

"It's quite likely those on board think us dead, or in the hands of the rebels, and if that's so, they won't come back."

"Then we are doomed, Walter!"

"I'm not going to give up yet, Si. Remember, even if it is over two hundred miles to Manila, we've both got a stout pair of legs and our health — "

"Gosh, do you calkerlate to walk that distance?" And Si's eyes opened wide. "Across mountains an' all, and in the enemy's country? I reckon you'd have your hands full, an' more."

"Have you anything better to propose?"

"I must allow I have not."

"And you don't want to stay here, do you?"

"But think of it, Walter, a journey of which we know absolutely nothing," said Si, with great deliberation.

"We know we want to strike out south-south-west."

"And how are you going to do it without a compass?"

"We'll have to guess at it. I know how the sun and compass stood a few days ago, and I think I can hit it pretty closely."

"But there are mountains to cross, aren't there?"

"Yes, this range behind us, called the Sierra Madre. To the west of the mountains is the Cagayan River, and if we followed that, it would bring us about half the journey."

"And wouldn't that land us right in the heart of the rebel territory?"

"I suppose it would."

"And how do you expect to steer clear of the enemy? Why, they'll gobble us up in no time."

Walter drew a long breath. "All right, Si, you can stay here if you wish. I intend to try my luck."

"Don't git mad, Walter; I'm only lookin' at the worst side on it," burst out the Yankee lad, hastily. "Of course I'll go along," he added after a pause. "Ain't nothing else to do."

So the talk ran on until nearly midnight. Then they heaped more wood on the fire and turned in, which was not saying much, since, as Si put it, "they hadn't no bunks nowhere." Yet they slept soundly until far into the next morning.

When they sprang up the sun was shining brightly and the storm was a thing of the past. All the birds were singing gayly, and this helped to put them in good humor. The fire had died low, and after a consultation they allowed it to go out, since it was doubtful if they could carry any along with safety.

A brief and scanty breakfast, washed down with a last drink from the spring, and they made certain

the *Central* was not in sight. Then they set out on their journey, Si carrying the remainder of the cormorant, and Walter with the pistol, ready to shoot should anything dangerous show itself.

But all the morning and well into the afternoon nothing living came to light but a few birds, that scattered speedily at their approach. Once they fancied they heard human voices at a distance and went into hiding for several minutes. But the alarm proved a false one, and they went on more confidently than ever.

When they rested that night both calculated that they had covered fifteen miles, — a goodly distance when the roughness of the country was taken into consideration. They halted at the top of a small mountain, at the base of which they made out a native village located on the bank of a winding stream.

On their journey they had come across some nuts which were sweet to the taste, and had eaten considerable of them, regardless of the fact that they might be poisonous. They realized that they were in desperate straits and must take many risks. The cormorant had been "sampled" several times, and they knew that the following morning would see the last of the bird.

"We'll keep a little of the flesh," said Si, "and a bone or two out of which to make fish-hooks, and then, when we get to a stream, we can try our luck at fishing."

The journey had made them sore all over, and the next morning Walter was so stiff he could hardly start out again. "That comes from being cooped up so long on shipboard," he said. "It will take us several days to get our walking legs."

Passing the village they had seen from the mountain top, they descended to the valley on the west of the Sierra Madre and began the journey toward the Cagayan River, making sure, however, to continue in a southwest direction. The country was still very hilly and rough, and several times they found themselves in a "pocket," and had to make detours through jungles and swamps, and over rocks which were back-breaking to climb.

"I don't wonder the soldiers can't get at the rebels when they take to the mountains," remarked Walter. "An army in a place like this couldn't do a thing, unless each man went on a hunt to suit himself."

"My idee is that the Filipinos will keep up their guerilla tactics long after the leaders surrender," returned Si. "The half-civilized ones are like our

Indians, and this jest suits 'em. Well, they can do as they please, only I don't want to stay among 'em." And he struck out faster than ever.

They were hungry again, and glad enough to stop at a stream which presented itself, and try their luck at fishing. For lines they used threads torn from their clothing and baited their bone fish-hooks with the cooked meat previously mentioned. But though they fished long and patiently, not a fish came near them.

"Hang the luck!" cried Si, at last. "I don't believe there are any fish here." But even as he spoke he saw a specimen of the finny tribe leap to the surface, catch an insect which had dropped there, and disappear like a flash.

"There's an idea!" said Walter, and forthwith began to hunt up some of the insects in question, which were not unlike our native crickets, excepting that they possessed a double set of wings. With one of the insects on his hook for bait he crept to the stream again and threw in exactly where the fish had appeared. Swish! up came the fish, eager for another such dainty morsel, the line grew taut, and in a second Walter had a beautifully speckled prize, weighing all of a pound.

"Hurrah, first blood!" shouted Si. "Give me one of those critters." And soon he was baited in a similar fashion. Walking up the stream, he too threw in with care and was rewarded with equal quickness, his catch being even larger than that of Walter.

The young sailors had now learned a secret well worth knowing, and they kept at the spot until they had sixteen fish to their credit, all squirming and twisting at a lively rate in a hollow into which they had been thrown.

"I fancy that is more than we need," said Walter, as he brought up the last, as plump a catch as any. "If we bake these and pack them in leaves, they will last us for several days. Probably we'll get tired of eating them before they are all gone."

"Humph, it will be better nor nothing," was Si's comment. "Come, I'm hungry for some already." And then they moved to a ravine which was not far away, where they spent the whole evening in preparing the fish and in getting a substantial supper. The day's journey had proved even harder than that of the day before, and in consequence the boys upon retiring slept, as Walter afterward declared, "like tops."

Daybreak found them making their way around a village with extreme care. They could plainly see

the villagers as they moved about in lazy fashion, smoking cigarettes and doing the little work which seemed necessary. They were now in the territory inhabited by Guinaanes, a tribe not so dark as the Negritos and taller. This tribe numbers probably ten thousand souls, and it is said that they were among the last to take up arms in the rebellion against Spain and, later on, against the United States. They were deadly enemies to the warlike Igorrotes, who inhabit the seacoast to the westward, and could not be induced to fight side by side with them under Aguinaldo or any other Filipino leader.

CHAPTER XV

THE ADVANCE UPON LAS PIÑAS

It was now four months and a half since hostilities had broken out on that fatal February evening between the United States troops and the Filipinos, and it must be confessed that the conflict seemed as far from a termination as ever.

The causes for this sad situation were numerous. At the start neither the Americans nor the Filipinos had looked for such a terrible outbreak, and when it had come, both sides were somewhat dazed; and in the war of words which followed each accused the other of breaking faith. Aguinaldo insisted that the Americans had started the fighting, and our officers were just as positive that the rebels had fired the first shots. The real truth of this matter will perhaps never be known.

After the outbreak came the advance of the Americans upon Caloocan, Polo, Marilo, Malolos, and other points, as related in "Under Otis in the Philippines,"

followed by Lawton's campaign to the Laguna de Bay and to San Isidro, as told in "The Campaign of the Jungle," and General MacArthur's gallant holding of his own in and around the railroad running from Manila to Malolos. Returning to the capital, General Lawton had immediately organized the expedition to the Morong peninsula, thus once again driving the rebels into their mountain fastnesses.

Many towns and villages had been occupied, but the American army was not a large one, and sickness and death had taken fully a fifth of the men out of the ranks; and so it became necessary to give up a majority of the captured places simply because we had no troops with which to garrison them.

The situation was grave, in spite of the endeavors of the leading generals to put a bright face upon the matter. The American holdings extended on the north but thirty-nine miles, to San Fernando, on the railroad. On the Laguna de Bay the only garrison was at Morong, and this was in constant danger, because of its isolation, the rebels again taking possession of Cainta and San Mateo. The line of the city defences extended from midway between Malate and Parañaque on the bay shore, south, in a semi-circle to San Pedro Macati, Taguig, and across the

Pasig River to Caloocan. The line was much broken, and in one or two spots the insurgents frequently showed themselves within three miles of Manila! And this after four months' battling to drive them away!

With practically the whole of the island to fall back upon, outside of Manila province, it was no wonder that the rebellion continued to flourish. All the natives were in sympathy with the Filipino soldiery, only passing for *amigos* when it became necessary to do so, and consequently any neighborhood could be levied upon for support by Aguinaldo and his followers. Rice was plentiful, and the average native can live as well on this food as can a Celestial. The hot-headed and patriotic but misguided leaders had sworn never to surrender, and so the contest went on.

"Something must be done to drive away the rebels on the south side of the city," said one of the American leaders, and on June 10 General Lawton was called upon to organize another campaign, which he did with the brigades under Generals Wheaton and Overshine, which included the regiment to which Ben and Gilbert Pennington were attached.

"We are off again!" cried Ben, when, on hearing the news, he told Larry and Gilbert. "And Major

Morris thinks we'll have a pretty tough campaign of it, too."

"Well, I am ready for fighting," replied Gilbert. "It seems like a year to me since I was brought to this hospital."

"It has certainly been a long time to me," put in Larry, and then he added quickly, "I am to go with you, Ben, am I not?"

"Do you feel equal to the task, Larry? Remember, you don't want to exert yourself too freely."

"Oh, I'm all right, and ready to give the rebels all the hard knocks I can."

"The Russell boys are born fighters," broke in Major Morris, with a laugh. "By the way, Ben, what of that brother of yours, who wrote that he was coming on?"

"He is on board of the transport *Central*. She is due here in a day or two, I believe."

"I reckon you are anxious to see Walter," said Gilbert. "I would like to see him myself."

"Yes, I am anxious," answered the young captain, and Larry said the same.

But there was no time to do much talking, for the regiment was to move for San Pedro Macati that noon, there to join the other forces to take part in

the expedition, which was being kept a secret, so that the Tagal spies in Manila might not carry the news to their friends. As old readers know, Gilbert was first lieutenant of Company B of the regiment, and consequently his duties were numerous in seeing that the command was ready to start at the time specified.

"Poor Gilmore, it's too bad he's got to be left behind," said Ben, when they were ready to start. "But it's a comfort to know that he is on a fair road to recovery."

The start from Manila was made on a clear day, and all the soldiers were in the best of spirits. Soon the route step was ordered, and as the men strode along to suit themselves Major Morris sided up to Ben.

"Captain, I've got a surprise to spring on you," he said, after speculating upon the results of the campaign then opening.

"What kind of a surprise?"

"I've been talking the matter over with Lieutenant Pennington, and he has concluded to do as I intend doing."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"We want you and Larry to go in with us," con-

tinued the major of the first battalion, ignoring the captain's questions.

"But you haven't told me what the surprise is, major. Out with it, and don't keep me guessing."

"Well, it's this. You know our time of enlistment runs out in a few months."

"Yes."

"Lieutenant Pennington and myself have concluded to reënlist."

"That's right; so will I — if Uncle Sam wants me."

"But we are not going to reënlist as before. We are going into the regular army — if the government will have us."

"Oh!" Ben was surprised and looked it. "Going to give up the volunteer service, then?"

"Yes. And we want you to come with us."

Ben shook his head slowly. "No, major, I don't think I care to do it. I am willing to fight as a volunteer, when Uncle Sam needs my services. But to make army life a business, so to speak, — well, that's different."

Major Morris's face fell. "I was afraid you would talk that way — and Pennington was afraid, too. But perhaps you'll reconsider the matter when your time is out here."

"It's possible, but I don't think so — now. You see I may be a fighter, but I'm not a fighting man — like you, for instance."

"I don't see the difference, captain."

"What I mean is this: I am ready to come at my country's call, but I am not willing to stand and wait for a mix-up. If you join the regular army, you'll have to remain a soldier, even if this war comes to an end the next day, while I, as a volunteer, will probably be discharged."

"That's true, but to me and to Pennington it doesn't make any difference."

"Are any of the others going into the regular army?"

"Yes, Rexford and Corporal Holwurth, and I overheard Stummer and Casey talking it over, too."

"I'll be sorry to lose you all," said Ben, seriously. "We have been close friends for a long time, and seen many hard knocks together."

"So we have, captain, and that's why we want you and Larry to join with us."

But Ben shook his head again. The regular service had no fascination for him, although he readily saw how it could appeal to such a dashing military

man as the major and such a warm-blooded fellow as his Southern chum.

"You won't get any rank in the regular army," he observed, after a pause.

"I am going to try for a lieutenant's commission. My record is a clean one, and I don't think they'll turn me down."

"And will Gilbert try, too?"

"Yes."

"Well, I wish you both success. But you have still some time to serve as a volunteer, and a good deal may happen before you leave us," concluded Ben, and then turned away to give some orders to his men, who were growing hilarious and had to be toned down.

When San Pedro Macati was reached, the scene was an animated one, for the different regiments occupied a large space with their tents and camp outfits. Here Ben found many old friends, and tales of adventure were freely exchanged.

The next day, which was Saturday, and one of the hottest on record, the advance began in earnest, both brigades moving in the direction of Guadalupe, instead of toward Manila Bay, in order to throw the enemy off the scent. The roads were still in a

frightful condition, but the soldiers moved forward with quiet determination, although the fierce heat soon made many of them drop from the ranks. At Guadalupe the two brigades separated, General Overshine's moving to the west, and General Wheaton's to the northwest, the object of General Lawton being to gather the enemy in between two fires.

It was not long after Ben's regiment had left Guadalupe that a scattering fire was heard ahead, and soon the report drifted in that the Filipinos were strongly entrenched along the road leading to Las Piñas and the bay.

"We are ordered to the front, Captain Russell," said Major Morris, presently, and a minute later the battalion was on the double-quick across a rice field, with the second and third battalions behind them. Then a skirmishing line was formed, extending across the field, from a road on the right to a steep hill on the left. The road was occupied by some of the American artillery, who went ahead, taking "pot shots" at the hill whenever a crowd of Filipinos showed themselves.

In the rice field the sun was "sizzling," as more than one returned soldier has expressed it, and to rush forward and then drop down for a wait was

"FORWARD!" SHOUTED BEN TO HIS COMMAND Page 153

sickening. But war is not child's play, and the gallant upholders of Old Glory made the best of it.

"Forward!" shouted Ben to his command, as the order came from his superior, and forward went Company D over the field to where there was a small irrigating trench, now half filled with water. The cracking of rifles — Mausers and old Springfields — was constant, and more than one man went down, a few never to rise again.

"Tell you vot," panted Carl Stummer, "of dem Filibinos keep on running, ve got to go after dem mit automopiles, hey?"

"Either thim or trolley cars, Carl," answered Dan Casey. "It's mesilf that's gettin' tired av sprintin' like a college athlete afther 'em."

Soon the command was in the thickest of the fighting, and then Ben and Larry got another taste of what this long-drawn-out war meant.

CHAPTER XVI

BATTLING ALONG THE ZAPOTE RIVER

"HIKE her up, boys; don't give them a chance to reload!"

"Make every shot tell, fellows; don't waste your ammunition on the air!"

"To the left, boys. Fire low. There they go! Now give it to 'em! Hike her up!'

So the cries arose as the battalion ranged across the rice-field. With our army in the Philippines the word "hike" is a great favorite and seems to carry special inspiration with it. Soon they were in the very centre of the field. The Tagals were at the edge of the jungle beyond and pouring in a hot and steady fire.

"Down! Careful aim, boys. Now then, up again! This way, double quick!" and another rush was made, the advancing line utilizing every bush, rise, or hollow within reach. It was dangerous work, and it needed brave men to carry it on, but no one faltered. Crack! crack! crack! went the

rifles, with now and then a dull boom from the artillery on the road. Staff officers were rushing hither and thither, and the air was filled with smoke. The hospital corps was now coming up, and those that were wounded or were overcome by the heat were quickly carried to the rear.

"Well, Larry, how do you feel now?" asked Ben, anxiously, as he ran up to his brother, as the latter was reloading.

"All right, but I'm as dry as a fish."

"Here's my canteen; I'm just afther filling it," put in Dan Casey, and thrust the article into Larry's hands. The youth was just taking a good drink, when crack! a bullet hit the canteen, went straight through it, and landed in the dirt beyond.

"Creation!" gasped Larry, and turned deadly pale for the moment. "Wasn't that a close shave, though!"

"I've got him!" burst out Dan Casey, after discharging his rifle. "That Dago will niver shpile another canteen fer me." He had caught sight of a Tagal in a distant tree, and his aim was true, for the rebel threw up his arms, let his Mauser fall, and then pitched headlong into the tall grass.

Another advance was now ordered, and soon Ben

found himself in the very thickest of the fight, with Larry close beside him, and Major Morris and Gilbert not far away, They were hugging the side of the hill, and the rebels, having left the first line of intrenchments, were scampering through the underbrush. Some were surrounded, and of these many were shot down or made prisoners.

The corner of a series of rocks was turned, when of a sudden a detachment of the Tagals hurled themselves upon Company B. Gilbert was in the thickest of this onslaught, and in his eagerness to kill an American officer one of the rebels grabbed him by the throat, at the same time raising a short sword as if to stab the lieutenant.

Ben, from a distance, saw the movement, and his heart leaped into his throat. There was no time left to think, — only to act, — and like a flash his pistol came up. There was a crack, and Ben saw the Tagal fall back badly wounded. Then the smoke of battle hid both Gilbert and the rebel from view.

"Good for you, Ben!" The cry came from Larry. The youth was in a dripping perspiration and covered with dirt and gun-soot. "Oh, but this is a great fight, isn't it?"

"It is, Larry; but take care, or you'll keel over," answered the older brother, and shortly after this Larry had to withdraw, too weak to stand longer upon his feet in that blazing sun.

Gradually the rebels were forced back, until they broke and ran, some in the direction of the Laguna de Bay, and others straight into the jungle to the southward. The Americans continued their march onward, and at nightfall went into temporary camp in a field just outside of Las Piñas, which is located on Manila Bay, midway between the capital and where the Peninsula of Cavité joins the mainland.

"That's pretty good work for one day," said Gilbert, when it was over. "Phew! how hot it was." He caught Ben by the hand. "I owe you a good deal, old fellow."

"It seems to me that you and Larry stood it wonderfully well," replied the young captain. "Why, ten of my men were knocked out by the heat."

"Six of our company are down — two quite badly knocked out, too. I wonder what the rebels will do next?"

"They'll scoot — as they always do," put in Major Morris, who stood near. "Even such a skilful officer as General Lawton can't bag them, it seems."

"I heard through one of the wounded rebels that the notorious General Adoz was in to-day's fight," went on Gilbert. "It's a pity we didn't capture him."

"It's a pity we can't capture General Aguinaldo," said the major. "It seems to me this rebellion would come to a short end if he was taken."

While the fight was going on through this jungle and on the hillside, the gunboat *Helena* and the monitor *Monadnock* had been shelling Las Piñas and Parañaque, and the country between, continuously, trying to drive the rebels inland, into the reach of the army. Out on the water this was hot work and drove many a sailor to the hospital bay. Captain Nichols of the *Monadnock* was overcome and died of the heat late in the afternoon.

The Sunday to follow was one of well-earned rest, and our friends did little, but lay around in the shade, discussing the situation. It was learned that many of the Filipinos had slipped past the outposts during the darkness and were hurrying southward, in the direction of the Zapote River. From the private secretary of General Pio del Pilar, who had deserted his employer, it was learned, through General Otis, that the Filipino army of southern Luzon

expected to make its stand on the banks of the river named.

"Well, I hope they do make a stand," said Ben, when he heard the news. "I would rather be fighting than running after them all day, especially in this heat."

On Monday, while the army was obtaining supplies from Manila, General Lawton went aboard the *Helena* and inspected the "lay of the land" below Las Piñas. His observations led him to believe that the rebels were indeed preparing for a stand, and the grim war veteran smiled quietly to himself as he returned to his headquarters.

Our soldiers had not advanced far on Tuesday when a rebel battery just south of Las Piñas opened up in grand style, which was replied to by our First Artillery and our warships in the bay. General Lawton took out several companies to inspect the roads leading from the shore to the American position and was almost caught in an ambush by rebels who could neither advance nor retreat. This brought on a terrific hand-to-hand encounter, and at first the Americans were scattered. But the gallant Lawton, who knew not the meaning of defeat, rallied his men and stormed the rebel

position repeatedly. In the meantime reënforcements were ordered up, — Ben's battalion among the rest, — and the fight grew hotter each instant. Ben's company had to wade through water and mud up to their ankles, in marsh-brush which was taller than their heads, and under a galling fire coming from a number of nipa huts lining the road beyond. These nipa huts had been occupied by Tagals who pretended to be friendly to the Americans, but now their white rags were gone and they showed their true character.

"On, men, we are needed at the front — General Lawton himself needs us!" cried Major Morris; and the battalion made a spurt, cheering Lawton and the flag as they advanced. Shot and shell were flying in every direction, and soon the swamp brush was afire in a dozen places, the heavy smoke adding itself to that from the volunteers' firearms.

"We are up against it this trip!" cried Gilbert, as he ran beside Ben for a few paces. "I reckon the rebels are making the fight of their lives."

"It's no worse than at Malolos," answered the young captain. "I know — "

"Down!" came the cry from the front, and the officers bent low. There was a roar and a rattle,

and shot and shell went shrieking over their heads. Then the din became so terrific that further conversation was impossible.

General Lawton's detachment was gained, and now the fight was to get to Overshine's brigade, also fighting desperately against an enemy numbering well up into the thousands. Every trail and every jungle held its Filipinos, all well armed and fighting for once with a courage which was phenomenal.

"Kill the pigs!" was the native cry. "Kill them! Spare not those who would take our beloved homes from us!" And then would follow a shrill yelling which was deafening, to be swallowed up in another rattle and roar of rifles and cannon. The very ground was torn up as by ploughs run mad, and the dead and dying lay everywhere, the painfully wounded shrieking for help, for water, for death to relieve them of their sufferings. Such is the ghastly terror of real war.

Sick at heart, almost stunned by the harrowing sights which constantly met their gaze, Ben and Larry kept on, close together, each mentally praying that the other might be spared to him. Ammunition was running low, and they fired now only

when the occasion appeared to demand it. Ben's shirt was torn half from his back, yet he never noticed it.

"Hurrah! they are running at last!" It was a cry from the left, and it was true. The rebel line had broken; now it seemed to melt first at one spot and then at another. A ringing cheer arose from the Americans. "The battle is ours! Hike her up! Don't let them get away this time! Hurrah for Old Glory!" And away went the soldiers in a mass, their anxiety of the minute before changed to fierce joy.

The Filipinos were fleeing to the banks of the Zapote River, and this stream gained, they burned the middle planking of the bridge, that the Americans might not follow them across. On the opposite shore they had strong intrenchments, with a well-planted battery. Along the river were numerous huts and houses, many of them manned by Tagalog sharpshooters. As the Americans came up, the sharpshooters brought down several of them. But then the sharpshooters fled, fearful of being surrounded.

Coming to the river, General Lawton saw that he could not get across over the bridge, and with-

drew his command to the shelter of some trees and some trenches which the enemy had dug long before. The artillery was speedily placed in position, and a constant and bitter fire was directed across the stream, which the insurgents returned as well as they were able. It was now the middle of the afternoon, and nobody had had anything to eat since early morning. But there was no let-up, all feeling that this was one of the contests which must count heavily for one side or the other.

"We'll never dislodge them," said Major Morris, after a survey through a field glass; but scarcely had he spoken when some of the rebels who had had several guns pointed at them with good effect, leaped up from their trenches and ran across an open field back of the river. This small beginning produced something of a panic, and soon others followed, the Filipino leaders trying vainly to stop the retreat.

"Fourteenth Infantry to the front!" was now the cry on the American side, and in a trice the brave soldiers were swimming the river. Then the Ninth and the Twelfth made a detour and crossed, and another pitched battle occurred close to the bridge, which was still smouldering. But

this last stand of the Filipinos was of short duration, and overwhelmed once more with defeat, they withdrew, with a loss of fifteen hundred killed, wounded, and captured. The American loss was about fifty killed and wounded, and ten missing.

CHAPTER XVII

JOB DOWLING SENDS A LETTER

It was three days later, and the American troops occupied all the territory south of Manila to Bacoor. The enemy had retired to Imus, a small town inland, having given up entirely the possession of the territory fronting Manila Bay.

There was no more fighting in sight for the time being, and Ben and Larry, with their friends, were glad enough to take it easy in the shade of some tall trees overshadowing the hut which the young captain had made his temporary quarters.

All of the soldiers were waiting for the mail from Manila, which was expected on an early wagon train. Soon the mail came in, bringing with it several letters for our friends.

"A letter from Uncle Job," said Larry, on receiving the missive. He tore the envelope open and read aloud, for Ben's benefit: —

"My dear Boys," the old man wrote, "I was very glad to get your last letter, but sorry to learn

that you were having so many ups and downs out in the Philippines. According to my notion Uncle Sam made a big mistake when he didn't let the islands alone after Dewey's victory. Seems to me the Filipinos deserve their liberty just as much as anybody.

"Howsomever, now you are in the ranks, you want to keep on doing your duty by your country to the finish. Walter sailed on the ship *Central*, and I guess he will be with you about the time you get this. I hope none of you get shot, and all come home safe and sound after the fighting is done. I don't see how you can keep on sodgering so long — 'twouldn't suit me nohow.

"That turning around about Braxton Bogg nearly took my breath out of me, for I was afraid my property was gone now sure. Was awful glad that you caught that Spaniard and got half the bank money anyway, and I hope you or the U. S. detective officers get the balance of the money before you give it up. Such outrageous rascals ought to be strung up.

"Well, I ain't got much more to write about. A speculator wanted me to invest in a new get-rich-quick concern, but I told him I had had my eye-teeth cut and wasn't investing in nothing excepting what

I knew was safe and sound. I see by the papers the wet season is coming at Manila. Don't get your feet wet any more than you can help and keep thick socks on all the time.

"Your affectionate

"UNCLE JOB.

"P.S. Don't get mad over what I said about sodgering. I am proud of you, and I hope you all come home generals or something like that."

"Isn't that Uncle Job to a T?" remarked Larry, when he had finished the epistle. "I'll wager he was all upset over that money matter. Well, I hope myself we collar that José Lupez before we quit the country."

"Yes, and collar him before he spends all that money," returned Ben. Then he gave a short laugh. "'Don't get your feet wet!' That's well meant; but if only Uncle Job knew what we have to put up with, I reckon he'd open his eyes."

"There's a good deal to think about in what he says of this war in the Philippines, Ben. In one way, I think the Filipinos ought to govern themselves, don't you?"

"I do, and I don't. It would be right in theory,

but could they do it practically? Some of the Tagals in the cities are educated up to it, but not the great masses. What would be the best, it seems to me, would be for Uncle Sam to take hold, but with the understanding that the Filipinos could do for themselves as soon as they were capable of handling the reins of government. They might — What is it, Gilbert?"

Ben broke off short, as the young Southerner came rushing up, with a Manila newspaper in his hand — one of the new sheets recently established and printed in English.

"Have you heard the news about the *Central?*" asked the lieutenant, anxiously.

"No; has she arrived?"

"She has, but — but — It's too bad, Ben, but I reckon you and Larry have got to be told."

"Something has happened to Walter?" cried both of the Russells, in a breath.

"I'm afraid so. The newspaper says the *Central*, while on her way to Manila, was caught in a storm, and had to put into a bay on the north coast of this island for repairs. While at anchor a number of the men were allowed a run on shore. When the main body came back from a long walk, two

of the number, Walter and a sailor named Si Doring, were missing."

"Walter!" muttered Ben. "Si Doring was his chum."

"And — and didn't they come back?" questioned Larry, faintly. He could scarcely speak.

"They did not. The next morning a rescuing party went out, but this was attacked by the natives, who also attacked the ship with fire arrows. One man was killed in the battle on the beach, and three wounded, and at last the *Central* sailed away, feeling it would be useless to try to rescue the missing ones, even if they were — well — you know." Gilbert's voice dropped. "I'm awfully sorry — you know I am," he added.

For the moment neither Ben nor Larry could speak. Walter missing, perhaps dead! The news was a frightful shock. They had looked forward with so much pleasure to seeing him in a day or two.

"It may not be as bad as you suppose," went on Gilbert, trying his best to soothe them. "He and his chum may have escaped into the woods."

"It is doubtful," returned Ben. "Poor, poor Walter! Perhaps we'll never hear what really did

become of him," and his eyes filled with tears which he hastily dashed away. Larry was also affected, and turned away to hide his grief.

There was no more to be learned out of the paper, but anxious to know all the particulars, Ben and Larry asked for permission to go to Manila and interview the commander of the transport. The permission was readily obtained, and they rode to the capital the next day, in company with some baggage carts and hospital ambulances.

"That news will break the Russell boys all up," remarked Major Morris, when told of the affair by Gilbert. "It's too bad. It seems to me those on the transport ought to have been more careful of their men."

"I agree with you," answered the young Southerner. "But, major, you said last night that you had a new bit of work in hand," he continued.

"I have, lieutenant. I was going to take both you and Captain Russell into my confidence, but I reckon it won't do any good to speak to the captain now. He's in no humor for the job."

"What job?"

"I managed to have a talk with General Lawton last night, and I got his permission to organize a

special party of eight or ten men to make a hunt for this notorious General Adoz, the guerilla chief. I was pumping several of the wounded Tagals, and I am pretty certain I can lay my hands on the man. I wanted to know if you — "

"I'll go, and glad of the chance," burst out the lieutenant before the major could finish. "When do we start?"

"You are willing, and no mistake, lieutenant — and I am glad of it. We will start to-night — if I can get my men together."

"Who do you expect to take along?"

"Only men I know thoroughly and can rely upon — you, Ralph Sorrel, that Tennesseean mountaineer, who helped you and Captain Russell in the last campaign, and Boxer the scout, who is around again; besides Carl Stummer and Dan Casey and a few others. We'll have a crowd ready to go anywhere and do anything, and that's what is wanted for work of this sort."

The major had laid his plans carefully, and at ten o'clock that night had his little command together and was giving them their last instructions. Then the party left the camp silently in the darkness.

The route taken was in the direction of the La-

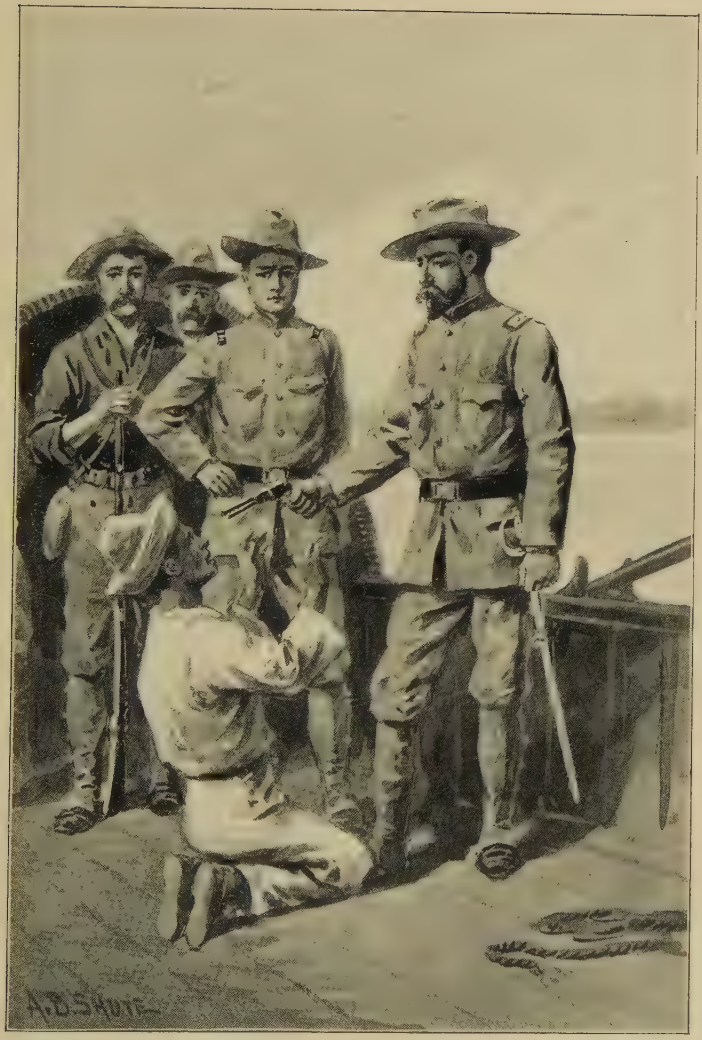
guna de Bay, along what is called by the natives the Road of the Friars, a rocky, uneven way which had not been repaired for many years. At four in the morning the party reached Candaras, a small village on the bay, and here took to a casco owned by a native fisherman. As was expected, when confronted by the Americans, the fisherman claimed he was an *amigo*, although at heart a thorough rebel.

"If you are a friend, you will come with us," said the major, and forced the man to enter the casco, a large clumsy affair, with a wooden hood over the stern seat. The fisherman protested, but the major would not listen, and soon the party was out on the lake.

"You know where the rocky shore is which the rebels call Satan's Foot," said Major Morris, when out of sight of the village. "I want you to take us to that spot, and without delay."

The fisherman shook his head. "I know of no such place," he protested.

"I say you do know," answered the major, coldly, and pulled out his pistol. "There is an old Spanish watch-tower at the point. If you do not land us at the tower before sunrise, I will put a bullet



He begged them not to murder him Page 173 .

through your head and dump you into the lake for the fishes to feed upon."

The threat made the fisherman tremble from head to foot, and he sank on his knees and begged them, in his native tongue, not to murder him. The major had no such intention, but did not allow a muscle of his face to betray him. Instead, he placed the muzzle of the pistol to the Tagal's forehead.

"You must do as I say, or you will soon be a dead man. Come, take up the oars and lose no more time. Any treachery on your part means death to you."

So full of fear that he could scarcely hold the oars, the fisherman fell to rowing, and one of the soldiers helped him. In this fashion the casco moved over the swollen lake for hours. No doubt the fisherman wanted to play them false, but he valued his life too highly to take the risk, and just as the sun was peeping over the distant mountains the boat came in sight of a rocky cliff standing well out into the water. Some distance back of the shore was a small stone tower, now covered with moss and vines and fast going into decay.

"Is this the place?" asked the major, eying the native sharply.

"Yes," was the surly reply.

"Then row around to the steps on the left. Be quick about it."

The order was obeyed, and as the casco reached the shore, Major Morris made a sign to Stummer and Casey, who caught the fisherman from behind and bound his hands.

"We will see if you have done as I told you to," said the major. "If you have fooled us, remember, your life is no longer your own."

"It is the right place," said the fisherman.

Scarcely had the words been spoken than two rifle shots rang out and two bullets sped across the rocky cliff, one striking the casco near the bow, and the other hitting the water beyond the boat.

"The enemy!" cried Gilbert. "Down!"

A volley followed, coming from behind the stone tower. One man was struck — Boxer the scout — and killed outright. The fisherman was also hit in the shoulder, and in his terror leaped overboard, waded ashore, and sped for the nearest jungle. The next instant our friends also entered the water and ran for a path leading to the top of the cliff.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAPTURING ADOZ, THE GUERILLA

"I RECKON we have found the guerilla chief!" cried Gilbert, as the Americans came to a halt behind a tumbled-down stone wall, attached to the old watch-tower.

"He seems to have found us," answered Major Morris, with an anxious look in his face. "Come, follow me. We have no time to waste here."

"Major, have ye got a particklar dislike ef I take jest one shot?" came from Ralph Sorrel, the tall Tennesseean.

"No; shoot if you have anything to shoot at," was the answer, and it was not yet fully delivered when Sorrel's rifle came up and there was a sharp crack, followed by a distant yell, and a Filipino fell out of some bushes not a hundred yards distant.

"Knew as how I could fetch him," murmured the mountaineer.

The party moved on, along the stone wall, until they reached a clump of bushes, behind which was

a small mountain stream running down to the lake. The stream was fringed with bushes and tall reeds.

"A camp-fire!" whispered Dan Casey, pointing across the stream. "It's burnin' lively, too. Sure, an' thim rebels was makin' thimselves at home."

"A horse — three of them," came from Gilbert soon after, and he pointed out the animals, tethered in the grass back of the stream. "One of them has an officer's trappings."

They pushed on, with rifles and pistols ready for immediate use should the occasion arise. But no more shots came, and reaching a road behind the watch-tower, they found it practically deserted.

"They have slipped away," said Gilbert. "It's the usual Filipino trick."

"Forward, on the double-quick!" cried the major. "There are six of the enemy running for the jungle on the left!"

The major was right, and soon they were speeding across the field behind the watch-tower. The stream had to be waded, and they sank in mud ankle deep. But no one minded this, and coming up on safe ground, they made after the flying ones at a smarter gait than ever. Three shots were

fired back at them, but none took effect. Then the Americans fired, and two of the Filipinos were wounded, one mortally.

"See, two of the enemy are running in a semi-circle," said Gilbert, presently. "What does that mean?"

"They are after those horses!" answered the major. "Come, we'll cut them off." And away he ran, with Gilbert at his heels. The others were about to follow, but had to turn their attention to the remaining Filipinos, and soon the major and the lieutenant found themselves alone.

As the two officers came out on a side road, they heard a calling in the field, which was separated from the road by a tall hedge. Pushing the bushes aside, they made out two Filipino officers in the act of mounting two of the horses which had been tethered at the spot.

"Surrender!" cried the major, and aimed a shot with his pistol, while Gilbert did the same. Two shots came back in return, and then one of the officers leaped into the saddle.

The second officer tried to follow, but before he could mount, Major Morris was upon him. The major's pistol was now empty, and so was that of

the Filipino, and it was a battle with swords, first in front of the horse and then around the animal. The blows flew thick and hot, and soon the major found that he had met a man fully worthy of his steel.

In the meantime, although the other officer had succeeded in mounting, his horse was scared, and instead of moving as directed, pranced around madly in a semicircle, throwing himself so wildly that the rider had to hold on around the beast's neck to keep from being thrown off.

"Stop!" called out Gilbert; but it was so much breath wasted, for the Filipino could not have stopped had he wished. Suddenly the horse bolted and made for the brush at the far end of the field. The rider was still on him, but he had dropped his pistol, and this weapon Gilbert now ran and picked up. It was silver-mounted and bore the name, in quaint Spanish lettering, ADOZ.

"Adoz!" cried the young Southerner. "He must be the noted guerilla chief. Oh, if only I could bag him!"

Hardly had the thought entered his mind than the third horse came up to him, swishing his tail nervously. Without giving a second thought to

what he was doing, Gilbert vaulted into the high Spanish saddle. His hot Southern blood was all aflame with excitement.

"I'll run him down!" he muttered between his set teeth. "I'll run him down or know the reason why I cannot!" And, urging the horse forward, he was soon across the field and into the bushes, with not even a glance back to see how the major was faring.

The way was uncertain, and Gilbert knew that he was running a big risk in following General Adoz into an unknown territory which might be alive with insurgents. Yet he was in a truly reckless spirit and ready almost for anything. On and on he went, through several fields of low brush and across low stone fences. Then he came out on a well-formed natural highway, lined here and there with nipa huts. These huts he was pleased to note were deserted.

General Adoz had now secured control of his steed and was moving forward at a sharp trot. The officer often glanced back, and once he waved his sword savagely at Gilbert. In return the young lieutenant fired on him, the bullet cutting through the guerilla's coat sleeve, and making him take

hastily to a side trail, overhung in spots with low tree branches.

As Adoz had not fired in return, the lieutenant felt certain that he had no second pistol, and now he urged his own steed forward with renewed vigor, bent upon taking his man alive if it could possibly be accomplished. The road was narrow and dangerous, and once he had to bend low over his horse's side, or a tree limb would have struck and probably killed him.

"He means to get away if he can," muttered Gilbert to himself, as the wild chase continued. Then, of a sudden, he heard a clatter on some rocks, a yell of alarm, and all became deadly silent.

What did it mean? Gilbert slowed up, but did not come to a halt. The trees were tall along the trail, the sun was under a cloud, and it was far from light in consequence. He was on the point of dismounting when he caught sight of General Adoz's horse coming toward him, riderless.

"Something serious has happened, that's sure," thought the young Southerner, and now alighted, but kept a firm hold of his steed's bridle. There was a turn just ahead, and coming to this he

made out a rocky ravine, which had been spanned by a half-rotten wooden bridge. The bridge had given way in the centre and only a few bits of cracked timbers clung to the side upon which Gilbert was located.

Feeling that the guerilla had been thrown into the ravine, the lieutenant moved to the brink and peered over. There was General Adoz, clinging to a big rock, ten feet below the roadway. Beneath the guerilla was a sheer decline of fifty feet, with jagged stones at the bottom.

"Hi, below there!" shouted Gilbert. "Do you surrender now?"

"Yees! yees!" called General Adoz, in very bad English. "Saf me, señor, saf me!"

"I will, if you'll promise to behave yourself."

"I vill surrendor! Saf me!" cried the Filipino. He was white in the face, for his hold was uncertain, and death appeared to lurk in the rocks below him.

At first Gilbert was in a quandary as to what had best be done. Then he took from the horse's trappings such straps as he could loosen with ease and buckled them together.

"Here, reach the strap!" he called out, as he

braced himself and lowered one end. "Don't be afraid; I won't let it slip."

"You — you vill hol' fas'?" asked the guerilla, suspiciously.

"Yes."

"I am von heafy man."

"I can manage you, if you don't get caught on the rocks. Now then, if you want me to pull you up."

The end of the strap dangled directly in front of the guerilla, and feeling that he could not remain where he was forever, he made a wild clutch at it and held on like grim death.

The load was a heavy one, and had not Gilbert been able to twist one foot fast in a gnarled tree root, he must certainly have been pulled over into the ravine on top of the guerilla. As it was, the straps strained and cracked, as if ready to snap in two, and every inch of gain had to be bought at the cost of sheer muscular power. But at last the head of the guerilla came over the ravine bank, and then he readily helped himself to a place of safety.

"You've had a narrow escape —" began Gilbert.

Instead of replying, the guerilla chief scowled

darkly at him. There was that in his wicked eyes which caused Gilbert fresh alarm, but before the young lieutenant could make a single move, Adoz was on him with the spring of a tiger and had hurled him backward.

"Dog! to think I would surrender to you!" he hissed, in Spanish. "Instead I will run you through with your own sword!" And he began to clutch for the weapon, his own being at the bottom of the ravine.

The young Southerner could not get at his pistol, nor could he manage to reach his sword. But he caught Adoz's arm and held it with a grip of steel.

Over and over rolled the pair, out into the roadway and then toward the broken end of the bridge. The Filipino was a powerful man weighing twenty or thirty pounds more than the young lieutenant, and Gilbert found himself unable to shake the man loose. Adoz had the handle of the sword, but so far the lieutenant had prevented the guerilla from withdrawing it from the scabbard.

The struggle had lasted five minutes and Gilbert began to feel weak, for the guerilla had come down upon him with all force, nearly knocking the wind

out of him. The breath of each came short and hard, for the struggle was now nearing an end, and Gilbert was beginning to fear that he was to come out second best.

"If I cannot use the sword, I can at least hurl you into the ravine!" panted Adoz, speaking again in his native tongue. So saying, he let go the handle of the blade and clutched Gilbert by the throat and the shoulder. "Die, you pig!" he added viciously.

"Le — let go m — my throat!" came from the lieutenant. And then, as Adoz still held on, he raised his foot and kicked the guerilla in the stomach with all his might. A grunt of anguish followed, and for an instant the grip of the Filipino general slackened. Then Gilbert reached for his sword and managed to draw it.

With the sword at his breast, General Adoz felt that he must make a new move, and so leaped back several paces. In the contest Gilbert's pistol had fallen in the roadway, and his eye fell upon this. But so did the eye of the lieutenant, and simultaneously they rushed for the firearm. Gilbert got in ahead and placed his foot upon it.

A clatter was now heard on the road, followed

by a cry in Major Morris's voice. He was coming straight in that direction, and Gilbert yelled to him to hurry. With the calling General Adoz started to retreat, but Gilbert promptly raised the pistol and covered him. In a moment more Major Morris was at hand, and a second muzzle was thrust toward the guerilla chief, who thereupon cried out that he would surrender.

"You said you would do that before," said Gilbert. "Up with your hands. If you attempt to lower them a single inch, I'll blow your worthless brains out."

The young lieutenant told the major what had occurred, and it was decided to bind the guerilla's hands and tie him on his horse. General Adoz wished to argue the matter, and presently offered them a thousand dollars, Spanish money, if they would release him; but to his protestations and his offer they paid no attention. Soon the Americans were riding back to the watch-tower, with their prisoner between them.

"I had a stiff fight of my own," said the major, as they rode along. "That other fellow was a skilful swordsman, I can tell you that."

"What became of him?"

"He is lying in the shade where I placed him. He

scratched my arm, but I planted my blade directly through his shoulder. He is good for several months in the hospital."

Upon returning to the field where the wounded man lay, it was learned that he was Captain Cansario, one of Adoz's private staff, — a villain who had long been wanted by the Spanish government for unlawful appropriations of public funds.

The others of the party soon put in an appearance. Casey had received a slight wound in the shoulder, while Carl Stummer had nearly ended his life by a tumble into a hidden well.

"Put ve scattered dem Filibinos, I can tell you dot," said the German soldier. "Ve kill more as a tozen of dem."

As the fisherman could not be found, the party had to row themselves back to Candaras, which was no mean thing to do, for they had to guess at the direction in which the village lay. The major ordered the party to wait until dark, fearing that some insurgents might be at the village to give them a surprise. But none of the enemy turned up, and by daybreak the next day the major's party was safe back in camp with their prisoners.

The capture of the notorious General Adoz and

his equally notorious hireling, Captain Cansario, created something of a sensation, and Gilbert and Major Morris speedily became the lions of the day. Both were complimented by their superiors and given to understand that they would be recommended for special bravery — which, in the army and navy, means a recommendation for advancement.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MEETING AT THE MOUNTAIN PASS

"WALTER, we don't seem to be getting anywhere in particular very fast. Here we have been travelling about a week, over hills and streams, dodging the natives, and scurrying around for something to eat, and to what purpose? My feet are so sore I can hardly walk on them, and my legs ain't no better. I'm afraid we undertook a big job when we started to hoof it to Manila."

It was Si who spoke, as he dropped under a palm tree overlooking a wide stretch of marshland, with here and there an abandoned paddy field. It was midday, hot and muggy, and both youths were utterly exhausted by a walk of several miles in mud up to their ankles. The day previous it had rained for ten hours out of twelve, and they had slept that night in clothes which were saturated, so it is not to be wondered at that they were in ill humor.

"Better give yourself up to the Filipinos and have done with it," returned Walter, somewhat bitterly.

"I don't believe you'd care very much if they knocked you in the head, as they do an ox in the slaughter-house."

"I wouldn't care jest now — but I would if they gave me time to think it over," came from the Yankee lad, with a touch of his former humor, brought on by the peculiar way in which his chum looked at him. "No, I ain't so disheartened as all that. But it's tough, ain't it, the luck we're having?" And he drew a mountainous sigh as he inspected one of his shoes, which had burst open at the side.

"That shoe won't last very long, Si — and neither will mine. Did you ever go barefooted?"

"Yes, when I was a little chap. But I wouldn't want to go without shoes over these rocks and stubble. Got any of that rice cake left?"

The cake to which he referred was some found in a deserted nipa hut they had passed the evening before. The hut had yielded them not only some rice cakes, but also some ripe cocoanuts and a good sharp knife. The knife was now practically their only weapon, for the pistol had been discharged in a hunt after game to eat, and there were no cartridges with which to reload it.

"I suppose a fellow in a story-book would enjoy

this journey wonderfully well," went on Walter, sarcastically. "If he was in a half-dime novel, he would find a gun with ammunition whenever he wanted it, and a matchbox with matches, and furnish himself with all he wanted to eat and to drink, and run across a deserted house with dry clothing and a lot of good things —"

"And then fall in with the savages and have 'em make him their king and show him a mine full o' gold an' diamonds," concluded Si, with a short laugh. "I read one of them yarns once. It was called 'Lalapo Joe, the Boy King o' the South Sea Islanders.' I jest got to where the boy king had found the diamonds and gold and sighted a friendly sail to take him home when my dad came out in the woodshed where I was reading, tore up the novel, and give me the most all-fired wollopin' you ever heard on, and then made me saw wood fer two hours afterward. By ginger, but thet was a dose, Walter, you jest believe me! But I reckon it did me some good, for I never took no stock in them novels afterwards."

Walter burst into a roar; he could not help it, Si's confession was such a comical one. "I guess we've all been through the mill," he said, when he could speak. "I remember I was once reading a

detective story when my mother caught me at it. That was about a year before she died. She didn't get angry, but she sat down quietly and made me go over the whole story with her, and then she pointed out all the absurd things, and showed me how no man could possibly do what that detective had been doing, — according to the book, — and she made me so ashamed and disgusted that I threw the story into the fire, and I haven't read a detective story since."

"I would like to see one of your modern detectives set down here," went on the Yankee lad. "I reckon he'd have his hands jest as full as anybody." And the young sailor chewed away at the rice cake in deep meditation. Walter also began to eat, and for some time little was said.

They had reached the Cagayan River, to find that the rain had caused a wide overflow of the banks. Here and there a village was found with its house posts deep in the water. They continued to keep at a distance, longing deeply for some friendly face that never showed itself.

But a change was at hand. On the day following the conversation recorded above, they came to the small mountain range which runs east and west,

dividing the northern portion of Luzon from the southern. Here they travelled through a pass where there was a well-defined trail running to a mountain torrent which empties itself into Lingayen Gulf, a deep indentation on the western shore of the island. Rounding a wall of rocks, Walter saw a sight which nearly caused his heart to stop beating.

"Look, Si! White people!" he gasped. "Americans at last! Thank God!"

"Americans, sure enough!" burst from the Yankee lad. "We're lucky, after all, ain't we?"

"So we are. I see two men. How many do you see?"

"Three — no, four. They are coming this way."

"There are some natives with them," went on Walter, his face taking a drop. "Natives with rifles! And the Americans are not armed! What can that mean?"

"By ginger, Walter, it means that those American soldiers are prisoners!"

"Oh, Si, impossible!"

"No, 'tain't! See, the men are tied together in pairs. They are prisoners, as true as you're born. Here's a how d'ye do!"

Si was right; the Americans approaching were

truly prisoners of the Filipinos. They were in rags, mostly barefooted, and their faces were pinched and full of misery. Each had his hands bound with strong cords and each was tied to another.

The prisoners were in charge of a party of twenty Filipinos — ten Tagals and ten Igorrotes, all well armed, the latter carrying bolos as well as guns. All were moving slowly, for two of the prisoners could not progress without limping painfully.

"Hurry, you pigs!" a Tagal would shout frequently, in his native tongue. "Hurry, or we'll shoot you down where you stand," and then for a moment the train would increase its speed. But the half-starved prisoners could not keep it up and soon relapsed into as slow a step as before. Then would follow blows and curses, in a manner that made the blood of both Walter and Si run cold.

"This is awful!" whispered Walter, as he drew out of sight behind the rocks. "What shall we do?"

"I'd like to knock over some of those heathens!" burst out the Yankee lad. "If only we had our muskets!"

"We are only two to twenty, Si; we could do little against such a crowd."

"We might do a whole lot if we kept out of sight and popped them off one at a time."

"Well, we haven't anything but the knife and the empty pistol, and to risk a hand-to-hand struggle would be foolhardy. We had better keep out of sight."

"And leave those poor chaps to their fate?"

"No. Let us follow the crowd. Perhaps we'll be able to do something for them in the dark, if we are not caught ourselves."

The Filipinos with their prisoners were now turning to the right, toward another mountain pass from that which the young sailors had been traversing. The two youths waited until they were almost out of sight, then followed stealthily by moving from tree to tree and bush to bush. They were tremendously interested and wondered who the prisoners could be.

"They look to me like sailors," observed Walter. "But their clothing is in such tatters it's all guesswork."

As they followed the others, the boys kept a constant lookout behind, that they might not be surprised from that direction. In this fashion fully a mile was covered, when the Filipinos called a halt

near a spring and went into temporary camp for the night.

"They are tying their prisoners to the trees," announced Si.

"Then they mean to stay awhile — probably over night," returned Walter. "I wonder if we could crawl in under cover of darkness and cut some of them loose?"

"I'm for tryin' it with you," was the quick reply. "Perhaps we can steal some of the guns, too."

Impatiently the two young sailors waited until the darkness was well advanced. The Filipinos had lighted a camp-fire and were around this, eating, drinking, and smoking. Only a small portion of the food was given to the prisoners, who were insulted and kicked whenever an opportunity offered.

At last the camp grew quiet, as one after another of the Filipinos fell asleep. Some of the prisoners were also slumbering, having slipped down in the bonds which held them.

"Now is our chance," whispered Si. "Are you ready, Walter?"

"I am ready, but I wish I had a knife. I can't do much with my fingers, in this darkness."

"Well, do what you can. Do you see that fellow over yonder, by the sharp rock?"

"Yes."

"He's fast asleep, and his gun is at his feet. I think you can get that firearm if you are slick about it."

"I'll try it," answered Walter. "What will you do?"

"Cut the ropes of those two men at the nearest tree first, and then try to get a gun for myself. We have the best of them in one way, for they are not dreaming of an attack in this forsaken place."

Their brief plan completed, they separated, and Walter began to crawl toward the sharp rock, doing it slowly and without the least noise. His heart beat rapidly, for he well knew the danger he was running. Should the Filipino rouse up and see him, the fellow would shoot the young sailor on the spot.

CHAPTER XX

CAPTURE AND ESCAPE OF THE "YORKTOWN" MEN

ALTHOUGH there was no moon, the night was clear, the storm having departed several hours before. At the sharp rock there was but a single tree, so that the shadows here were not so thick as at the locality where the Americans were held prisoners.

Slowly, and with extreme caution, Walter advanced step by step until he was within two yards of the sleeping Tagal, who snored and groaned lustily in his heavy slumber. The fire had been allowed to die down, and the man's form could be seen but indistinctly. There was a glint on the gun barrel, and toward this the young sailor made his way.

Four steps more and he had the weapon in his possession. It was a Mauser of recent type, and loaded. Looking down at the sleeping rebel, he saw that the fellow wore a belt half filled with cartridges.

"If I could only get that belt," thought the youth; but he dared not undertake the task, since the

article was strapped tightly, and one hand of the sleeper rested on the buckle. Nevertheless, by careful work he managed to pull seven of the cartridges from the belt, and these he slipped into one of his pockets.

Retreating as speedily as he could without making any noise, Walter next circled around several trees and came closer to where Si was at work. The Yankee lad had aroused two of the prisoners and had his hands over their mouths to prevent any outcry.

"Hush!" whispered Si. "Don't make any noise. I will cut you loose."

The prisoners were much amazed, but they understood, and remained quiet while he cut their bonds.

"Now arm yourselves if you can," went on the Yankee lad, in a voice filled with restrained excitement. "But don't wake the rebels up until I've cut loose some of your friends."

"All right, messmate," was the whispered reply from one of the men, and Si was now certain he was a sailor, for he wore a seaman's headgear, upon the band of which appeared the name *Yorktown*.

"I have the rifle," whispered Walter. "What shall I do next?"

"Better stand guard and shoot the first rebel who tries to harm us," was Si's ready reply. Then he moved away in the darkness of several trees growing close together, while the two sailors who had been released did likewise.

An instant later came a shrill cry of alarm, one of the sailors having stepped on the arm of a Filipino lying in a dark hollow, and in a moment the entire camp was in commotion.

"The jig is up!" came from Si. "Walter, where are you?"

"Here," answered the young sailor.

As Walter spoke, one of the rebels seemed to rise up almost at his feet, and the youth saw a rifle pointed directly at his breast. But his own weapon was up, and with his heart in his throat he pulled the trigger. There was a crack and a flash, and Walter saw the Filipino fall back, badly wounded in the shoulder.

"Good for you, lad!" cried one of the released prisoners, and with a bound he was at the fallen one's side and had snatched away his Mauser. Then he, too, blazed away, and a rebel who was making for Si dropped in his tracks, shot through the head.

By this time all the prisoners were aroused, and they called to be released. But the Filipinos gathered in front of them, and a volley was fired at our friends and the two who had had their bonds cut. The volley had scarce died away, when Walter felt a dull pain in his thigh. Putting down his hand, he brought it up covered with blood.

"I — I am shot!" he gasped.

"Shot?" repeated Si. "Oh, Walter! Is it bad?"

"It's in the leg — I don't know how bad. I've got to retreat." And then Walter backed away into the jungle behind the rocks, limping painfully, and thinking that every step must be his last.

"You're a brave boy, right enough," cried a voice into his ear, and before Walter could answer he found himself raised up bodily and borne along he knew not to where. His head began to swim, and presently he went into a dreamy state bordering upon unconsciousness. He felt the bushes scratch his face and hands, and felt the warm blood flowing down his trousers leg to his foot. He tried to rouse himself, but could not, and in a

listless way wondered if he was fatally wounded and if this state was the beginning of death.

When Walter's brain began to clear, he found himself flat on his back in utter darkness, his head resting on a folded-up sailor's jacket, and his right hand held by the tar who had carried him off.

"Where — am — I?" he asked weakly.

"Hush!" was the whispered return. "Keep quiet, and you'll be all right." And the sailor gave him a reassuring clutch of the hand. A long silence followed, during which the youth put his hand down to the wound in his thigh, to find it tightly bandaged.

Fully an hour went by before the lad spoke again, and during that time the sailor left him several times, to see if any of the enemy or any of their friends were at hand. But no one appeared.

"Where is Si?" asked Walter, when he could stand the suspense no longer.

"Was that your friend?"

"Yes."

"I don't know what became of him, lad. The last I saw he was fighting hand to hand with that knife he carried."

"And what of that other prisoner who was released?"

"He ran off in another direction. I was hoping some of them would come this way."

"Where are we?"

"In a hollow under a big cliff. I carried you here after you were shot. How does the leg feel?"

"I can't feel anything."

"Humph! I hope the wound isn't a bad one; for if it is, I don't know what we will do. But tell me, how did you come here — miles and miles away from any of the ships?"

"It's a long story. We were on a transport bound for Manila and took a run ashore, and the natives came after us."

"What! Then you didn't come from one of the warships of the squadron?"

"No. Did you?"

"Yes; I and my messmates all belong to the *Yorktown*. Our craft was on the Baler River, and fourteen of us, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Gillmore, were sent out in a cutter to reconnoitre up the stream. We went up a pretty good distance, and didn't see anything to alarm us, when all of a sudden we were attacked from both

sides. Almost a hundred rebels were in the bushes, and they pumped out so much lead that four of our men were killed outright and several of them were wounded. I got a nip in the arm, near the elbow. We tried our best to fight them off, and killed at least half a dozen. But then the cutter got to leaking so fast from the holes shot into her that she sank and we had to swim for it."

"And how many of you were taken? only the four I saw?"

"No, seven of us — all that weren't killed or wounded, including our commander, who fought as pluckily as anybody you ever saw. When we got ashore we found ourselves in the hands of a Spanish traitor who had joined the rebels some time before. He was very brutal, and handled us like dogs."

"But didn't your ship come to rescue you?"

"I suppose so; but we were marched inland in double-quick order, for about three or four miles, to a hidden camp of the rebels. There we were bound hands and feet and used about as meanly as anybody can imagine. The Spaniard was in command, and after waiting two days he said we were all to be shot."

"Shot?" cried Walter. "But they didn't carry the order into execution."

"They came pretty close to do it, lad. We were lined up and blindfolded and told to get ready to die. But just as the detail was on the point of firing, the Spaniard came rushing up and said it was not to be — that the execution was to be delayed. Then we were marched off, through mud and water, and over the rocks, to San Isidro, the rebel capital, where we were placed in prison, under a certain General Tiño, the roughest old dog of a rebel I ever clapped eyes on."

"While you were at San Isidro, did you see Aguinaldo?" asked Walter, more interested than ever.

"I saw him once and tried to speak to him, but he wouldn't listen to me nor to anybody else. Our troops were pressing him hard, and I reckon he was getting ready to leave for parts unknown. We were kept at San Isidro for several days, and then we started with part of the rebel army for Vigan, which we reached four weeks later, ragged, foot-sore, and half starved, as you see me now. Oh, but we suffered, how much no outsider will ever realize. More than once I wished I was dead."

"What became of the other three of your party?"

"I believe they are not far off, for we were generally kept pretty close together. The commander was with the others. We've been in the mountains so long now that I've lost track of time. There are other prisoners, too, but no sailors."

"Didn't you try to escape?"

"Bless you, yes, more than a dozen times. But the guards were sharp, and when one or another got away he was always brought back and treated to the worst flogging I ever witnessed. One man, one of the soldiers who joined us after we left Vigan, died from the treatment."

The story the sailor had told was strictly true, and, it may be added here, the whole tale of the capture of the men from the *Yorktown*, their fearful sufferings for eight weary and heartrending months, their long marches through jungles and swamps, and their final rescue by a detachment of soldiers under the command of Colonel L. H. Hare, reads far more like some romance of the dark ages than a narrative of present-day facts. They, with some other prisoners, were taken to the most forlorn mountain region known, in the vicinity of the Arbaluque River, and here their captors left them

to their fate, without food or firearms, and with half of the number ready to drop from sickness and exhaustion. It took the abandoned ones three days to gain the bank of the stream, in the meantime living on nothing but berries and the meat of a lame horse which one day came straying toward them. At the river they constructed rafts, but the savage natives confronted them, and all they had to defend themselves with were stones and clubs, while the natives wounded several of the party with arrows and spears. The exhausted ones would surely have been killed to a man, but just then some shots were heard in the natives' rear, and into view burst the party under Colonel Hare, speedily putting the Filipinos to flight.

But though rescued, the ex-prisoners were by no means safe and free from sufferings. The rescuers were also out of food, and to move across the country was now becoming impossible, on account of the heavy rains. Rafts were constructed on the river, and all hands embarked for a trip full of perils, for the current ran swiftly and more than one raft was overturned in the rapids through which they had to pass. When the party finally got back to the coast and among friends, every man was more dead than alive.

CHAPTER XXI

WALTER'S WOUND

"Do you see anything of them yet, Palmer?"

"Don't see a soul, Russell," replied the sailor from the *Yorktown*, after a long look through the trees and over the rocks. "My idea is that all hands have cleared out of this locality."

Walter's face fell, and he gave a deep sigh. "I was in hope you would see my friend," he murmured. He felt too weak to do much talking.

"Nobody around; I'm dead sure on that," returned the sailor. "But don't you worry — I don't think Doring's dead — nor my messmates either."

Morning was at hand, and Walter had been lying for hours just where Palmer had placed him. The wounded limb was still numb, and the youth was almost afraid to stand upon it, for fear of starting the flow of blood afresh.

Palmer had remained on guard all through the darkness, caring for Walter in the meantime with the tenderness of a woman. He was a big-framed

tar, but his captivity had reduced his weight greatly. He had told Walter that he had not had a square meal for several weeks.

"And not a single chaw of tobacco," he had added. "And that was as bad as no eating."

"Well, I wouldn't miss the tobacco," Walter had returned, "for I don't use the weed. But I know what hunger is, too." And at intervals he had told the details of his story.

What to do next neither knew. It was out of the question for Walter to journey far, if indeed he could walk at all, and they must find something to eat. Water was at hand, and this was the only comforting thing they possessed.

As the sun mounted in the sky, Palmer broached the subject of returning to the scene of the fight. "I'll sneak up like a cat," he said. "More than likely the rebels have moved on, and if that's so, I'll see if I can't find something to eat lying around."

He was soon gone, taking the rifle Walter had captured with him. The wounded lad listened to his retreating footsteps, and then all became as silent as a tomb.

Half an hour went by, — to Walter it seemed half

a day, — and still the silence continued. What if the sailor should lose his way or become captured, and so never come back? The cold perspiration gathered on Walter's forehead at the thought. He was helpless — he could not do the first thing for himself. He would have to remain where he was, in that lonely spot, to die!

"I don't believe I'll ever get to see Ben and Larry again," was his bitter soliloquy. "And they'll never get the straight of it how I died. Oh, if only this cruel rebellion was over and we were all safe at home once more!"

From where he lay Walter could see over several bushes to a distant hill, overgrown with short shrubbery. Presently he made out a movement on this hill.

"The rebels!" he muttered, and tried to raise himself on his elbow. He was right; over the hill marched a band of sixteen Filipinos with several prisoners among them. The whole party was in sight for several minutes. Walter tried to make out the faces of the prisoners, but the distance baffled him.

"Si may be among them," he mused. "Well, it's hard to tell who is the worst off just at present."

At last Palmer came back, with his arms full of things he had picked up. "Couldn't see a sign of anybody," he declared. "They have left the vicinity entirely, I calculate."

"I saw some of them," answered the young sailor, and told what he had seen. Palmer nodded gravely.

"It must have been our crowd. Well, we can't follow them, — at least not now, — so we must do the next best thing. I struck a bit of luck, boy, — some meat and rice, and onions and hardtack. We'll have a fair dinner, after all."

The meal was easily prepared, Palmer making a stew such as sailors like, and Walter was not backward in disposing of his share. The stew strengthened the lad, and he sat up for several hours afterward.

"I was so afraid you wouldn't come back — that something might happen to you," he said, while eating.

"Avast, lad, do you think I would desert one as did so much for me? No; Bob Palmer ain't that sort, and never was!"

"Then you will stick by me?"

"To the end, lad, and there's my hand on it." And the tar shoved out his lean fingers, which Walter grasped warmly. The touch was an honest one

and made the boy's heart much lighter than it had been for hours.

Again night was upon them, and now Palmer came to the conclusion that there was no need to remain on guard. Stretching himself beside Walter, he was soon asleep, and presently Walter followed. Nothing happened to disturb them, and both slept until some time after sunrise.

Four days were spent in the shelter under the rocks, and during that time Walter's wound grew well rapidly. It had been but a glancing shot, and his main trouble was from the loss of blood. Every day Palmer washed the wound and bound it up afresh, in linen torn from the shirts of both. The sailor from the *Yorktown* was a natural nurse, and to his skill was largely due Walter's recovery.

During the time spent in the hollow Palmer had tried his hand both at fishing and hunting and had brought in food enough to feed them and give them provisions for several days to come. On the fourth day Walter tried walking, and announced that he could go on, but it must be slowly, and not too many miles per day at first.

Palmer's "bump of locality" was well developed, and he had their course all mapped out. "We'll

move directly eastward for about ten or twelve miles," he said. "There we shall come to a fair-sized river, and if we can find a boat, we'll be fixed, for we can hide in the daytime and float down the stream at night."

Walter had thought himself very brave on striking out, but before half a mile was covered he was pale and so exhausted he had to sit down. "I — I don't seem to have the backbone that I thought I had," he panted.

"Take it easy, lad," responded Palmer. "Remember the old proverb, 'The more haste, the less speed.' We haven't got to get to Manila at any definite time."

"But I want to get out of this horrible country. I declare, if I ever get on shipboard again, I'll never want to go ashore — at least, while I am in the Philippines."

"It's no joke, that's certain," returned the old sailor. "When we left the *Yorktown* for that scouting expedition, I never dreamed of getting in such a pickle as this, not me!"

"I don't believe I'd feel so bad if I knew Si was safe. He was my chum, you know."

"Exactly; and two of those other prisoners were

my chums — have been for years. It's too bad, but we've got to make the best on it, and not cry over spilt milk."

When Walter had rested, the journey was resumed over a grassy field where walking was fairly easy. Then they reached another rocky territory, and here Palmer called a halt, stating that the youth had done enough for that day.

"To-morrow, if you're equal to it, we can go a bit farther," he observed. "If you break down, you may have a long spell of sickness," he added, as he looked at the youth's flushed face, where the color seemed to come and go.

Two more days slipped by, and they covered twenty miles. The travelling taxed Walter to the utmost and made him feverish, and he had to rest every mile or two. They had crossed one small stream, but this was not large enough for a craft of any sort.

The day following, Palmer went on ahead, fearing they were journeying into a territory where Walter could not travel. Hardly had he disappeared, when he came back full of excitement.

"I've struck the rebels with some of our prisoners!" he cried.

There was no time to say more, and they crept into the bushes. Soon they heard the other party approaching, the Filipinos berating their captives roundly. They passed, and Palmer crept close to Walter.

"There is one of my chums, and Si Doring, too," he whispered. "I'm going to follow and see if I can't free them." And before the lad could answer he was off.

The hours and the night to follow were sickening ones to Walter. Palmer did not come back, and the young sailor did not know how his newly made friend had been discovered and captured afresh. He waited and waited, his heavy eyes refusing to close in sleep, and his ears on the alert for the slightest sound which might indicate the sailor's return. At last when morning came and the sun arose, he threw himself down on the grass in utter despair.

"He is gone! I am alone, utterly alone!" Over and over he echoed the words, and the tears came to his eyes in spite of himself. Never had the vast solitude of that unbroken country so impressed him as now. As far as his eye could reach he saw nothing but hills and jungles, grassy plains and

little mountain torrents. Not even an animal was visible, and even the birds seemed scarce. He was truly alone, utterly alone.

"I must follow him — I can't remain by myself," such was his next thought, and picking up the little provisions they had been carrying he tried to locate the uncertain trail. At that moment he felt he would rather be a prisoner among enemies than by himself.

Less than quarter of a mile was covered and he came to a halt. His strength was gone and he could go no farther. The trail, too, had slipped him, and he was completely turned around and bewildered.

He gazed around again, and looking down the hillside, made out a collection of huts and houses far below, close to the side of a fair-sized stream. Then something of a feeling of joy took possession of him. He was near somebody, *somebody* — it did not matter whether they were friends or foes. Then of a sudden a dark wave passed before his eyes, followed by a flush as of fire. He staggered, tried to save himself, and then pitched forward on the sward, completely overcome.

CHAPTER XXII

A FRIEND IN NEED

WALTER had been lying where he fell for over an hour when two young natives, chancing to go up the hill for firewood, discovered his body and went screaming back to their hut, to tell the news to their mother.

"An *Americano!*" they cried, in their peculiar dialect. "An American, and he looks as if he was dead!"

The announcement aroused the whole of the sleepy village, and soon a party of two women and two old men followed the children up the hill. The young men of the place were all at the front or marching to get there.

"An *Americano* truly," said one of the old men. "And he is not dead."

"Then what ails him?" asked the other old man, as he shook the young sailor. "He does not seem to be wounded, either."

They made an examination, and one of the women came and placed her hand on Walter's forehead. "Ah, as I thought, the pig has a fever! And he is going to have it worse. Perhaps he will die."

"Small loss if he does die," growled the second woman, as she, too, felt of the young sailor's forehead. "Do you think he is one of the prisoners who got away from Corel's party, Banno?"

"'Tis not unlikely," answered the old man addressed. "But he is young to be a prisoner. What shall we do with him?"

Soon several others came up from the village, and all gathered around the prostrate form.

"How white he is!" whispered one big boy. "I thought all *Americanos* were red and wore feathers in their hair and painted their faces." His mistake was a common one among the ignorant Filipinos, who think of Uncle Sam's people as an offshoot of the Indians. One child after another dared his companions to touch the body, but each shrank back, fearing some evil *knosha*, or "hoodoo," would fall upon him.

At length a tall, thin woman with a rough, red scar on her face broke through the crowd, which readily parted to give her passage. "What is the

trouble here?" she demanded, in a cold, quick voice, as if she was used to playing the mistress.

"*Un Americano*," replied one of the old men, with a low salute.

"And where did he come from?"

"We do not know. We found him here exactly as you see him. He seems to be down with the first stroke of a fever."

"Then he must be one of the prisoners who escaped — or else he got so sick that they abandoned him." The woman with the scar took a step forward and looked closely at Walter's face. "Impossible!" she ejaculated. "And yet how like!"

"How like what?" asked one of the other women.

"It does not concern you, Bamrogina." The woman with the scar turned to the men. "Carry him down to my house. No one shall say that he was left to die like a sick dog within sight of Biloguana. 'Twould bring evil to us all."

"You will take the pig to your house?" shrieked the woman called Bamrogina.

"Yes."

"And nurse him back to life — that he may kill our husbands and sons?"

"We can keep him a prisoner, if it be necessary."

Bamrogina shrugged her greasy brown shoulders. "As you will, — but I shall not touch him. He shall rot first and the birds can fly away with his meat."

"The men shall carry him. Come, take hold, or it will be too late to do anything."

"You were at Manila, Señora Garabella," went on the fat woman, suspiciously. "Perhaps you know the pig."

"I do not — although he looks very much like an *Americano* that did me a great service. It is because of this that I take pity on him."

But little more was said, Inez Garabella being in no humor for further talking. Soon the old men were on their way to the village, carrying Walter between them. Passing the single street with its irregular row of nipa huts, they came to a house of fair pretentions situated in a garden which had once been surrounded by a stone wall, now, however, greatly dilapidated.

"Place him upon yonder couch," said Señora Garabella. "I will do what I can for him, and you can watch out that he does not escape," she added, half sarcastically; and then one after another the neighbors withdrew, leaving Walter and the lady and the two servants of the place to themselves.

Inez Garabella had spoken the truth when she said that the strong resemblance between Walter and Captain Ben made her take an interest in the young sailor. She had gotten home from Manila but a few days before, and the memory of what the captain had done for her at the deserted monastery was still fresh in her mind.

"No matter if they are utter strangers, I will do what I can for the poor boy," she told herself. "He may be a prisoner of war, but he shall not be used worse than a lame caribao," and she set to work to nurse Walter without delay.

As the others had said, the young tar was in for a fever, brought on partly by the wound he had suffered and partly by his travelling in the heat. As soon as he came out of his semi-unconscious state he began to rave and throw himself, and it took the lady of the house and the strongest serving-maid to hold him down.

"Don't leave me!" he would cry. "Oh, Si! Palmer! don't leave me! Shoot me, if you wish, but don't leave me!" And then his mood would change. "See! see! the ship is sailing and the natives are coming back! Run, run, or we'll be caught and slaughtered. Where is the water, Si?

Leave some for your old chum, Walter Russell! Oh, how dry I am, and you have drunk the last drop! Si, as sure as my name is Walter Russell we'll never reach Manila, and I'll never see Larry and Ben again!"

Inez Garabella listened to his ravings with interest. She could make out but little of what was said, but she understood the name Russell and smiled faintly.

"I was not mistaken," she told herself. "They are of the same name. They must be brothers, or cousins. Now I will surely do all I can for him."

She was indeed "a friend in need" and at a time when Walter needed such a friend greatly. The poor boy had the fever, and in addition his wound needed skilful medical attention. For days he raved upon his bed of sickness, and somebody had to watch him constantly. The native doctor could do but little, and even that was done unwillingly, and would not have been done at all had not the lady of the house paid him well for his services.

At last came the day when the fever was at its worst, and for twenty-four hours it was a question

whether Walter would live or die. He was now reduced to a skeleton, and for days had known nobody and would touch nothing but water. Then came a change, and he sank into a natural sleep — the first he had experienced since being brought to the house.

When Walter opened his eyes the next morning, he gazed around him in bewilderment. He lay upon a rattan couch in the centre of a somewhat bare apartment. Close at hand was a window overlooking a sparkling river. From a distance came the calls of several children playing some game.

"Where am I?" he asked himself, and then called weakly, "Si!"

"You are bettair?" asked a voice beside him, and turning he saw a girl of twelve sitting there. Her name was Rosa, and she was a relative of Inez Garabella, from Manila, and could speak English fairly well.

"What did you say?" he questioned, still bewildered.

"I said you are bettair. You haf been sick — verra sick. My aunt, she bring you here, and we nurse you."

"Have I been sick? How long?"

"'Tis nearly three weeks now. You have a high fever and a bad leg."

"I was shot in the leg. And so I had a fever?" He mused for a moment, trying vainly to get back his thoughts. "Where is Si? And Palmer?"

The girl shook her head. Then she arose, went to the doorway, which was covered with a bamboo and bead curtain, and called Señora Garabella, who came quickly. A short talk in Spanish followed.

"Oh, I remember now," came presently from Walter. "I was running after Palmer, when the whole world seemed to turn upside down, all in a second. I was awfully weak. Did you see anything of my friends? I mean Si Doring and that big sailor, Palmer. Palmer got away from the rebels, and we were going to release some others," he rattled on, the color rising in his face.

"Hush!" said the girl. "My aunt say you must keep quiet, or you will be sick a second time. She say you can talk to-morrow." And there the conversation came to an end. Walter dozed off, and it was nightfall before he again opened his eyes. Then he partook of some nourishment and dropped off once more, this time in a sleep which did him a world of good.

The next day Inez Garabella questioned him, through her niece, and learned who he was and how he had come in the neighborhood.

"My aunt, she know one *Capitan* Russell," said Rosa. "She want to know if you and the *capitan* are of the same family."

"Captain Russell!" ejaculated Walter. "He is my brother!"

When told of this, Inez Garabella smiled and clasped her hands together. "I knew it," she cried in Spanish. "I knew it! They look so much alike."

Through Rosa she told to Walter her story of the meeting in the monastery and of how Ben had foiled Barnabas Moval's base designs. "My aunt, she is deeply grateful to your brother for that," said Rosa. "And in return she will be your friend."

"She has done a good deal for me already. I shall never forget her kindness. I presume those villagers would have left me to die where I fell."

Walter then asked about the other prisoners and about Si, but could learn nothing of them. The rebel army was not in the neighborhood, having begun to concentrate along the shore of the Lin-

gayen Gulf, hoping to attack General MacArthur, at a favorable moment, from the northwest.

"What do you intend to do with me?" he asked, later on.

At this Inez Garabella shook her head sadly.

"She does not know," said Rosa. "She says the house is watched from the outside by nearly all of those left in the village, and if you try to get away, they will pounce upon you and cast you into prison."

"Do you consider me a prisoner of war?"

"No, no, she would let you go — if she could. But she is powerless to deal with those in the village."

"Then I've got to stay here?"

"What else is there to do? If you try to run away, you are so weak you would soon be sick again — or they might shoot you down. You had better remain here for the present, so my aunt, she says."

And so it was arranged. But Walter longed to see Larry and Ben, and the days dragged heavily upon his hands.

CHAPTER XXIII

GENERAL MacARTHUR'S ADVANCE

So far there had been several breaks in the rainy season, thus allowing the American troops to make movements of more or less importance. But now the wet spell set in steadily, and any movement on the part of the soldiers was out of the question. The whole of the Philippine Islands were flooded, the water rising in the Laguna de Bay to such an extent that several villages were swept away. In Manila Bay the damage done to the shipping was extensive, the loss including a warehouse stored with government goods.

Under such circumstances our soldiers could simply grin and bear it, as the saying goes. Those who were at the barracks in Manila and other cities were well enough off, but those in the villages and in the field were far from comfortable. The rainy season added to the sickness, until the hospitals at Manila became so crowded those in authority scarcely knew what to do with the patients.

The rainy season was one of unusual cheerlessness to Ben and Larry, for so far nothing had been heard concerning Walter excepting that he had disappeared ashore, and that it was more than likely the young sailor had been killed in the running fight with the Negritos. Both of the Russells had questioned those on the *Central* closely but without further satisfaction.

"He's gone — that's all there is to it," said Larry, with trembling lips. "Poor Walter, we'll never see him again."

Ben heaved a long sigh. "You must be right, Larry. If only he had remained at home with Uncle Job!"

For a month after the fighting on the Zapote River the regiment to which Ben was attached remained in that vicinity. In the meantime Larry returned to Manila and was placed on the *Charleston*, then doing duty along the coast. Thus the two brothers were once more separated, not to meet again for some time to come.

During the rainy season everything possible was done to make the insurgents throw down their arms, and in Manila the Filipinos were instructed in the art of self-government. Yet this had no

effect upon Aguinaldo and his followers, then safe at Tarlac and in the mountains behind that town. He wanted absolute freedom or nothing, and declared that he would fight to the very last to obtain it. Certainly such qualities must be admired in any man, even though his judgment be questioned.

It was not until November 5 that the autumnal campaign of 1899 opened in the Philippines. In the meantime Ben's regiment had been sent north, to join the forces under General MacArthur, for a vigorous attack was to be made upon Aguinaldo's stronghold, and all the troops available were to be used for that purpose.

The attack was to come from three quarters, and the intention was, if possible, to surprise the insurgents and hem them in. The main body of rebels still rested at Tarlac and in the mountains nearest to the seacoast. It was ordered by General Otis that General MacArthur march from Angeles up the railroad leading to Dagupan, thus striking the insurgents on the south; General Lawton, with some cavalry, was to attack from a point twenty-two miles east of the railroad, and guard the mountain passes in that neighborhood; while General Wheaton, sailing from Manila to Lingayen Gulf,

should land his forces at San Fabian beach and press the rebels from the west. Thus it was hoped Aguinaldo's main army would be hemmed in and forced to surrender.

General Arthur MacArthur, Ben's new commander, had been conspicuous in Philippine warfare ever since the outbreak of February 4. He was a born soldier, having entered the Civil War as first lieutenant of the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin Infantry when but seventeen years of age. A year later, for conspicuous bravery, he was decorated with a medal of honor, and at the age of nineteen he became the commander of a regiment which accomplished much under his daring leadership. When the great rebellion ended, he entered the regular service as a lieutenant, but speedily arose to the position of captain. From this his progress was steady until, when the trouble in the Philippines broke out, he was sent to the islands as a brigadier general of volunteers. For services at the taking of the capital he was appointed major-general of volunteers by President McKinley. Although over fifty years of age, he was in the prime of manhood and as full of vigor and dash as ever.

The transfer to Angeles was not unwelcome to Ben, for this meant getting closer to the territory where

Walter had disappeared, and he still hoped, though faintly, to obtain some tidings of his lost brother. He felt especially lonely, now that Larry, too, was gone.

"It's the uncertainty that hurts," he said one day, to Gilbert. "If Walter is alive, who can tell what he is suffering, as a prisoner of those savage Filipinos? You know how brutally they have treated some of their prisoners."

"You must hope for the best, Ben," replied the young Southerner, kindly. "And above all, don't allow your mind to brood over this too much." And he did his best to cheer the captain up.

The march of the regiment was a little to the east of the Manila-Dagupan railroad, over paddy fields and through low brush which had something of a familiar look to Ben, who had covered the territory before. At a small village on the bank of a creek, running parallel to the tracks, the soldiers turned off, with orders to take the town of Magalang, where the rebels had some strong intrenchments. It was hardly presumed that the Filipinos would offer any resistance, and when they opened a sudden fire, it came somewhat as a surprise.

"We are up against it once more!" cried Major

Morris, as he passed Ben. "Now, I want this battalion to give a good account of itself."

"I shall do my best, major," answered the young captain. Then the order to advance came, and the soldiers spread out in a long skirmish line.

There was a small hill just in front of the town, covered with long grass much beaten down by former rains. As Ben's command moved forward, twenty yards at a time, the young captain noticed that the grass seemed much cut up.

"It's not natural," he told himself, yet, for the time being, he could not make out what it meant.

"Hike her up!" was the old cry, yet the soldiers could not do much "hiking," for the reason that the insurgents were strongly intrenched. There was a natural wall of rock at hand, and this had been heightened by bags of sand and dirt, making quite a respectable fortification.

"Will, I niver, captain, did ye see that?" came suddenly in a cry from Dan Casey.

"What was it, Casey?"

"Sure, an' the grass is full av powdher, or somethin' like it."

"Powder? Where?"

"There was a bullet struck yonder stone, an' whin

the fire flew, it sint up a blaze like powdher burnin'. I'm afther thinkin' — "

Dan Casey got no further, for just then there was a flash and a roar in the grass not fifty yards from where the young captain and his corporal were standing. One private was badly burned and ran off shrieking with pain.

"They have mined this field!" ejaculated Ben, and ran with all speed to Major Morris. "Major, we must retreat!" he yelled.

"Retreat? Are you mad, Captain Russell?" cried the commander of the first battalion.

"No, I am not mad. This field has been mined — some of the powder just went off. If we — "

Boom! It was another explosion, and not a great distance from where Major Morris stood. The air was filled with flying stones and dirt, and it must be acknowledged that many of those close at hand turned pale. Here was something new in Filipino warfare.

"Dot peats poisoned vells," came from Carl Stummer. "Vot ve do — go ahead annahow?"

Another roar followed, and the command was ordered to retreat with all possible speed. At this the rebels let out a mad yelling, thinking the day

"Gangway for General MacArthur!" was the cry Page 233

won. Some appeared at the top of their intrenchments, but the American sharpshooters quickly picked them off.

The course of our troops was now to the eastward, around a jungle partly in the water, and then up a small hill filled with loose stones. Everybody was angry over the trick which had been played, and all were aching to "square accounts," as Major Morris expressed it. The soldiers went forward with a rush and with little regard for military formation. To many it was a go-as-you-please affair, and the best man was the one to get to the enemy first.

The top of the hill gained, the Americans found themselves to one side of the rebel intrenchments and facing several old cannon which had done duty in Spanish service years before. There was a small church to one side of the hill, and here were located a company of Tagalog sharpshooters, who began firing as soon as the first of our soldiers showed himself.

"Gangway for General MacArthur!" was the cry from those in the rear, and presently the commander of the column dashed into view, followed by several of his staff.

"Colonel Darcy, you will send two battalions to

surround yonder church," was the command of the general. "The remaining battalion can move across the hill to that first rise. A battalion of regulars will join you in a few minutes." And then the general was off to another portion of the field.

The colonel lost no time in following out General MacArthur's orders, and the battalions to be sent over to the church were the first and the third — they containing the best marksmen in the regiment.

To surround the church was easy, but Colonel Darcy knew well enough that he was expected not alone to surround the edifice, but to capture its defenders as well, if the deed could be accomplished. This was a dangerous piece of work, and he looked questioningly at his men.

"It's all right, colonel; I know the men will do it," whispered Major Morris, for he and his superior were very intimate.

"I don't want half the command killed," was the slow answer. "We have lost men enough."

With caution the two battalions moved closer to the church, taking advantage of every tree and bush, rock and stone wall. The sharpshooters, however, saw them coming, and kept up a constant crack!

crack! with their Mausers. Evidently they did not intend to give ground without a bitter struggle.

Presently Ben's company reached a stone wall which ran at right angles to the church. The wall was joined to a stone shed, and there was a second wall reaching to the rear door of the church itself.

"Be careful, boys," said the young captain. "Don't take too much for granted. Those rebels may be planning a surprise."

He had hardly spoken, when several reports rang out, and the bullets hit the stone wall just in front of the captain and his men. Only the gun barrels of the enemy were visible, and the Americans did not, therefore, return the shots.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN WHICH MAGALANG IS TAKEN

"WHAT do you think of this, Ben?" asked Gilbert, as he and his company came up.

"Those rebels mean business," answered the young captain. "They are evidently the cream of the Filipino sharpshooters."

"Perhaps they are the fellows you met when you were out with poor Gilmore."

"If they are, I sincerely hope we'll bag them," was the quick reply.

No more could be said, and a moment later Ben found himself at the end of the stone wall and close to the shed previously mentioned. The Filipinos had now ceased firing, and for the time being hardly a sound of any sort was to be heard in the vicinity, although there was a steady cracking of firearms in the vicinity of Magalang proper, showing that General MacArthur was pushing the attack with vigor.

Facing the field which the soldiers of the first battalion occupied was a small ditch, and opposite was an iron door, communicating with the stone shed.

This door stood partly open, and crawling up from the ditch Carl Stummer and Dan Casey peeped into the stone shed, to find it dark inside.

"Sure, an' it's all right," cried Casey to those left along the wall and in the ditch, and boldly entered the shed, followed by Stummer. Scarcely were they in the building than the iron door closed with a loud bang and each soldier was grabbed from the rear in the utter darkness.

"Trapped!" yelled the Irish volunteer, and struggled with might and main to release himself. Stummer also tried to cry out, but a pair of bony hands were at his throat, and he could scarcely breathe. Both of our friends turned and twisted and wrestled with all the skill they possessed, but they were but two to five, and were at last overpowered by heavy blows on the head and shoulders.

In the meantime Ben had been close to the doorway, and he heard the iron barrier shut and caught the semi-muffled cry from Dan Casey. Without hesitation he ran up to the door and pushed upon it with all of his strength. It was bolted and refused to budge.

"Open up!" he commanded sharply. "Open up, or it will be the worse for you!" Nobody

paid attention to his cry, and again he hurled himself at the door, but all in vain.

"What's up?" asked several, coming to the scene. "Who's in there, captain?"

"Stummer and Casey — the Filipinos have caught them. Who will follow me over the wall to rescue them?"

"I will!" "So will I!" "Count on me!" Such were some of the answers received from eight of the company members. Waiting for nothing more, Ben stepped back, made a leap and clutched the top of the wall with his hands. A soldier gave him a boost, and in return he gave the private a hand up. Soon the others were coming over the wall like so many monkeys.

But the sharpshooters had spotted the movement, quick as it was, and three shots rang out, and one man was hit in the leg and had to fall back on the outer side of the enclosure. Ben felt a bullet brush his cheek, and putting up his hand withdrew it covered with blood.

"You are hit, cap," came from one of the men.

"It's only a scratch, Leary. Come — the shed! Quick!"

The private understood, and followed Ben around

the corner of the building, which stood at such an angle that one side was out of sight of the windows of the church. Only a few feet away was the inner door of the shed, and this stood open for the space of several inches.

"What's the next move, cap?" was the question put to Ben by the men, all in a bunch. "Shall we rush for the shed?"

"Yes, but— Down!"

As Ben finished, he shoved back the man next to him, and all dropped quickly, for they understood by the young captain's manner that something unusual was on the wing. Several sharpshooters had come up out of a trap-door upon the roof of the church. A rapid volley, which hit nobody, and the rebels started to withdraw.

Ben's blood was up, and like a flash he aimed his pistol and pulled the trigger twice in rapid succession. Two of the privates fired immediately after, and one of the sharpshooters was hit in the abdomen. His friends tried to drag him back to a place of safety, but they missed their grip upon him, and slowly he slid from the trap-door to the edge of the church roof, where he hung suspended for a full minute in mid-air, shrieking for help. But no one

could assist him, and with a last cry he fell to the ground with a dull thud, to rise no more.

"Horrible!" gasped Ben, who could not help but see the fall, and he shivered with the awfulness of the scene. Then, without taking time for a second thought, he ran into the open and leaped for the shed door, with Leary the private on his heels.

A sight equally thrilling met his gaze inside of the dimly lit building. Stummer had been completely overcome, and a rebel was about to give Dan Casey a finishing blow with his gun butt. But the weapon never came down, for Ben seized it and hurled it aside, and its owner with it.

"Surrender, or we'll shoot you down like dogs!" cried the captain; and as the Filipinos turned to use their rifles, he emptied his revolver into the crowd, while Leary and the others used their guns. The shed was filled with smoke and with the yells and groans of the wounded and dying. A Filipino caught Ben by the legs and threw him to the floor, and the two rolled over and over in a hand-to-hand struggle for the mastery.

It was a trying time, and one Ben was not likely to forget for long months to come, for somebody in the semi-darkness stepped on his shoulder, bruising it

not a little. His man had him by the arm and the hip, while the young captain held fast to the other's windpipe. Soon each was well-nigh exhausted, yet Ben felt by no means like giving in.

It was Leary who came to the rescue, with a blow from his rifle butt which all but killed the Filipino, coming as it did straight on the enemy's left temple. The grip relaxed, and Ben staggered up, panting heavily and with the blood from his wounded cheek in his eyes.

When the smoke cleared away, it was found that two of the enemy were dead and the others placed *hors-de-combat*. Stummer was senseless, with a nasty cut in his shoulder, and Dan Casey was grating his teeth to keep himself from screaming with pain over an arm that was out of joint. The Irish volunteer was cared for by two of his friends, who pulled the joint into place once more, and then honest Dan fainted from exhaustion.

The two battalions were now on every side of the church, having come in as closely as the protection of the walls and brushwood allowed. The outer door to the shed was opened, and into the narrow building poured the balance of Ben's command. From the inner door could be caught a view of

two of the church windows, but these were now deserted.

Boom! It was the report of a distant gun, and a shot struck the church between two of the windows, making a jagged rent in the dilapidated masonry. Boom! came another shot, hitting the tower and scattering the stones in all directions.

"Hurrah! our battery has the range!" came the cry from the Americans. "Those sharpshooters won't stay in there much longer."

"Watch out for a rush!" said Ben. "Be ready, and make every shot tell!" And he reloaded his pistol with all speed.

Ten minutes passed, and during that time four other shots came hurling themselves at the church. Two did but little damage, but the others entered the building and tore down a mass of woodwork and plaster, filling the edifice with dust and flying splinters.

The sharpshooters now found the retreat too hot to hold them, and forming into a compact body, they made for a side door of the building, which was swung open suddenly and noiselessly. Then out they poured and ran with all speed for the nearest jungle, two hundred and fifty yards away. So far

they had seen no Americans in that direction and hoped to find a clear passage.

But they were sadly mistaken, for in the jungle were the first and second companies of the third battalion, hidden behind a slight rise of ground. As the Filipinos came on, they were greeted with a galling fire which played fearful havoc with their front rank and caused them to halt.

"We have them now!" cried Major Morris, as he ran up and ordered the first battalion to close up around the church, thus cutting off the enemy's retreat. Following this, the fourth company was ordered to follow up the sharpshooters, and away they went out of the stone shed, cheering lustily and shooting as they ran.

Finding themselves hemmed in, front and rear, the Filipinos essayed to separate, one portion to the left and the other to the right. But again their movements were frustrated by other companies coming up, and then began a slaughter terrible to witness, but which the misguided Filipinos had brought on themselves. Man after man went down, killed outright, while scores were wounded.

"In the name of Providence, why don't you surrender?" demanded Major Morris, as he saw a

Filipino officer stagger by, clutching his wounded arm. The officer stared at him and suddenly drew a dirty handkerchief from his pocket. Waving this handkerchief over his head, he turned back, and soon several other handkerchiefs appeared. The firing on the American side ceased, and the brief but bloody contest came to an end.

This was the fight at the old church, where twenty-six sharpshooters were taken prisoners, among them Carlos Vivachi, one of the most remarkable marksmen in the world, and who held the honor — as he termed it — of having brought down nine Spanish officers during the war with Spain. How many Americans he had killed or wounded Vivachi would never tell.

In the meantime the other commands under General MacArthur were not idle, and a brilliant attack upon Magalang itself soon put the enemy on the run. During this fight a small part of the town took fire and burned down. The Filipinos were chased for over a mile beyond the outskirts, and the battle resulted in a loss to them of over two hundred killed and wounded. The losses to the Americans were but trifling in comparison.

When the fighting was over, the regiment under

Colonel Darcy was ordered to remain at the church until the next day. This suited the soldiers very well, for the place was clean, dry, and cool. It had not been in use for several years, and most of the movable church property had been taken away.

When the wounded and dead had been cared for, Ben and the major took a walk around the building to inspect it. Ben's shoulder still ached, and his face bore several long strips of court plaster, while Major Morris's left hand was bound up because of a wound to the knuckle of the thumb.

The church was divided into several parts, after the manner of such buildings in Luzon, with here and there a little stone closet or cell. One of these cells was found to be filled with old records, now musty with age.

"These may be of value," said the major. He looked a few of the books over. "Births and deaths, I think."

"The Filipinos have lost interest in such records just now, major. Fighting has — What's that?"

Ben stopped speaking and gazed at his companion in perplexity. A loud sneeze had startled him, coming from the top of the cell. Looking up, they saw a man huddled up on a shelf, glaring down at them.

CHAPTER XXV

A FRIAR TELLS HIS STORY

THE man on the shelf was dressed in the dull-colored garb of a Filipino friar. His face was thin and yellow, and as he gazed down at Ben and the major, the young captain could not help but compare him to some chimpanzee that had broken out of a menagerie. One eye drooped with a wicked leer, while the other was wide open in a commingling of anger and terror.

"Hi, what are you doing up there?" demanded the major.

"I no harm anybody," was the slow answer, delivered in broken English.

"I reckon he thought to hide from us," put in Ben. "He has the dress of a friar, but that may be only a disguise."

"You had better come down," went on the major, as the man did not offer to move.

"You will no shoota me?" questioned the man, suspiciously.

"No; come down."

How the man had gotten up on the high stone shelf was hard to guess, and it was equally hard for him to gain the floor again. As he fell, rather than leaped, down, he began to sneeze again, for he had a severe cold in the head.

"I must say you don't look like a soldier," continued Major Morris, as he surveyed the individual from head to foot. "Were you fighting with the sharpshooters?"

"No! no!" The friar crossed himself. "I no shoota nobody. I am of de church!" And he crossed himself again.

"Well, what were you doing here? This place hasn't been used as a church for a long time."

"I am a poor friar, señor — verra poor friar. I come to Magalang from Desdenas, thinking to find one friend — one old friend — in Magalang. He is gone, — to de war, — and so I go away poor, and sleep in de church las' night. When I awake, de church is full of de soldiers, an' I was verra much afraid. I come in here an' hide. Bang! bang! de gun go, an' I verra much afraid more! No! no! I no shoota nobody! I like not war, no! no!" And once again the holy man crossed himself, and then began to bow and to sneeze.

Both Ben and the major could not help but smile. They had met such friars before, — for the Philippines are fairly overrun with them — some good, some indifferent, and some very bad, — and they knew that not one of the order thinks of taking up arms either on one side or the other. Besides, the specimen before them looked so thoroughly uncomfortable and miserable they could not help but pity him.

"If you're all right, we'll not hurt you," said the major.

"T'ank you, señor, t'ank you!" And the friar almost touched the floor with his bowing.

"Are you hungry?" asked Ben.

"Hungry!" The holy man began to mutter something in his native tongue. "I have eaten nothing, señor, — no, nothing; think of it! — in two days!"

"You shall have something, and at once," said Ben. "You are willing, major?"

"To be sure, captain; give him his fill, poor fellow. I wouldn't be in his boots for a good deal." And while Ben took the friar to where he might have something to comfort the inner man, the major continued his walk through the old building.

While the friar was eating his fill, Ben questioned the man, to make certain that no mistake was being made whereby he was entertaining a Tagalog spy in disguise. But the fellow was exactly what he claimed to be, and humble to the last degree. He said that he belonged at Morong, but had been in and around Desdenas for several months, doing work for another friar.

"Desdenas," mused Ben. "I have heard of that place before. How far is it from here?"

"Not a many miles, *capitan* — just beyond Mabalacat, a small place, but verra beautiful, on de side of de mountain."

"It is now held by the Filipinos?"

"Yees, *capitan*." The friar gazed at his empty plate. "*Americano* beans are verra good — you have to spare a few more?"

"Yes, help yourself." And the friar did so readily. "Desdenas! I've heard of that place from somebody. Now who was it?" Ben knit his brows in thought. "Oh, yes, that Inez Garabella mentioned it." He turned again to the friar. "What is your name?"

"Monclova, *capitan*."

"While you were in Desdenas did you meet another friar named Ponprè?"

"Ponprè! It is the verra same — de man I do work for, — Alfredo Ponprè! De *capitan* knows him?"

"Not personally, but I have heard of him. He came, I believe, from a town still farther north, a place called Biloguana."

"Yees, yees — dat is he, Alfredo Ponprè — de rich friar. But he gives not much of his wealth away." And the face of Monclova fell abruptly.

"If you worked for him, you must know something about him," went on the young captain, with interest. "Did you ever hear of any affair between him and a rich mine owner named Garabella — a man now dead?"

At this question the friar looked somewhat disturbed, and Ben saw at once that he knew a good deal more than he cared to mention. He sneezed several times and helped himself to some more of the food which had been provided.

"I heara somet'ing — not verra much," he answered slowly. "Da haf troubles, yees, but Garabella is gone now and so — " He finished with a shrug of his lean shoulders. "What you knowa of dees, *capitan?*"

"I know Inez Garabella, the daughter, and I

was told that this Ponprè and a man named Moval tried to have Señor Garabella kidnapped and taken to Borneo."

"Yees?" The friar said no more, but his face was suggestive of a good deal.

"You know about this?"

"I heara eet, yees, but perhap it no true — de peoples say so much; not so?"

"Is Ponprè still at Desdenas?"

"Yees — dat is, he was dare t'ree day ago, *capitan*."

"Where was he stopping?"

"At de house of da rich man, Rousana."

The friar could not, or would not, tell more, and soon after left the camp, stating he was going to work his way to Malolos. It was the first and last time the young captain saw him. But the conversation between the pair was destined to become an important one.

After the taking of Magalang, the regiment to which Ben was attached rested for a day and then moved back toward the line of the railroad. On every hand the native huts and houses were found deserted and empty of all which was valuable. At one point a large rice-house was found, with

the rice scattered in all directions and trampled in the mud.

"They don't want us to get hold of any of their stores," said Gilbert to Ben.

"I don't blame them," answered the captain. "They are playing the game of war to the best of their ability."

On the day following, the column under General MacArthur moved along the railroad to Malabacat. Here the rebels were intrenched just outside of the town, but showed only a slight resistance. Colonel Darcy's command was sent to the right wing, which brought the first battalion on a small hill overlooking a fertile valley eastward, backed up by tall mountains. In the valley rested a collection of houses by the side of a winding stream, and after the fighting Ben learned that the hamlet was Desdenas.

"I would like to pay the village a visit," said the captain of Company D to his major.

"For what reason?"

"I would like to meet a friar named Alfredo Ponprè and have a talk with him." And then Ben told Major Morris of what Inez Garabella and Friar Monclova had said.

"Well, we are ordered to subdue all villages in our track," was the major's answer. "Let us ask Colonel Darcy about this." They hurried to the colonel, had a long talk with him; and the upshot of the matter was that the first battalion moved away to take Desdenas under control.

No resistance was offered to the troops, the few natives left in the village displaying white rags at the doors of their huts in token of friendliness. Accompanied by the major, Ben asked his way to the residence of Señor Rousana, and was directed to a pretty mansion set in a grove of tropical trees.

"He certainly lives in pretty good style," remarked the major as the two strode up the shady garden path. "Wonder if he is a Filipino sympathizer?"

"It's more than likely," answered Ben. "The majority of them are, behind Uncle Sam's back."

A knock on the door brought a neat waiting-maid to answer their summons. She looked much disturbed upon seeing the American officers, and fled at once without waiting to hear what they might have to say.

"She's mighty civil," remarked the major, dryly,

and sat down on a rattan bench to await developments. Soon they heard voices coming from one of the rooms overlooking the veranda, the blinds of the windows being closed to shut out the glaring sunshine.

"An interruption, Ponprè," said a deep voice, in Spanish. "We shall have to postpone the business."

"I cannot wait any longer," was the answer; and Ben felt certain it was Alfredo Ponprè who was speaking. "You know Barnabas Moval wishes the will. If you —"

"You have the document handy?" demanded the first speaker.

"Yes."

"And it was signed by Garabella?"

"Yes."

"How did you obtain it?"

"That was my affair, Señor Rousana. I have it, and by this, you or Moval can obtain possession of that mine —"

"Hush, Ponprè, remember the old saying, that walls sometimes leak. We will talk further after I have finished with these intruders. I know not what has brought them here. Sit down till I have interviewed them."

The conversation came to an end, and in a minute more Señor Rousana appeared on the veranda and bowed low.

"A great honor," he said, in an oily manner. "May I ask what brings you Americans to my humble home?"

"I want to talk to Friar Ponprè," said Ben, shortly.

"Yes? And you are —?" Señor Rousana paused inquiringly.

"I am Captain Ben Russell, of the American army."

At the mention of the name there was a slight movement in the room beyond. Stepping to the blind of a handy window, Ben threw it open suddenly, and found himself face to face with Alfredo Ponprè, who had come forward to listen to what was being said.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHASING AGUINALDO INTO THE MOUNTAINS

THE friar was a short, stocky man, with a rough, ruddy face and a pair of fishy blue eyes. He was attired in the regular garb of the order, but his clothes were of a much finer cloth than those worn by the fellow caught in the old church at Magalang.

On seeing himself thus suddenly confronted by the young captain, he started back, and his face changed color. He had heard of Ben before, and knew he was the party who had assisted Inez Garabella and helped to make Barnabas Moval a prisoner.

"Ah — you —" he stammered in Spanish.

"You are Friar Ponprè, I believe," said Ben, in English.

"Yees," was the uncomfortable answer.

"I wish to talk to you, sir. Will you kindly step out here?"

"What ees eet dat you wanta of me?" said the friar, as he came out on the veranda.

"You come from a town called Biloguana, I believe."

The friar nodded.

"You were well acquainted with a rich man named Garabella."

Again the friar nodded.

"You plotted with a man named Moval to have this Garabella kidnapped and sent to Borneo."

"No! no! dat ees nota so, *capitan*. Moval plot —I do noddings!"

"But Inez Garabella says you were in the plot."

"She ees — a — mistaken."

"And Moval has admitted that he had dealings with you," went on the young captain.

The shot told, and the face of the friar grew dark and full of passion.

"Ha! he has told somet'ings, eh? He ees a snake in de grass, Moval! Bah! I was a fool —" He broke off short. "I know noddings, *capitan*." And he crossed himself.

"You do know something, Alfredo Ponprè; you know everything. You have that will —"

"No! no!" And now the friar made a sudden clutch for his breast, which movement did not escape Ben or the major. "Dare ees some mistake —"

"Make him a prisoner, captain," broke in Major Morris. "I'm dead sure we have the right man, and sure he has that will in his breast pocket."

At this the friar turned from red to white and staggered back. Stepping to Señor Rousana, he began to speak rapidly in Spanish, but the Americans cut him short.

"You must submit," said the major, and tapped his pistol significantly. "Captain Russell, you may search him."

At once the friar began to expostulate, and his friend, Señor Rousana, took an active part. But the major soon made the rich Filipino become silent, by threatening to arrest him also. Then Ponprè was searched, and from a breast pocket was taken a packet of legal-looking documents, which included one in an envelope bearing the inscription in Spanish: "Last Will and Testament of Andres Enrique Garabella."

"This is the document which was stolen," said Ben. He faced the friar sternly. "You have gotten yourself in much trouble, and will have to come with me."

"Where to?"

"I shall send you to Manila — to keep company with Barnabas Moval."

"And da will?"

"Shall be sent to whom it belongs, Inez Garabella."

Here Señor Rousana tried to interfere again, and it looked as if there would be a long, wordy war, when Major Morris cut the matter short by asking the Filipino to go along with them.

"I shall not stir," growled Señor Rousana, and ran into the house before either the major or the captain could stop him.

"He's scared," laughed Ben.

"Do you want him particularly?"

"No."

"Then let us go."

The friar hated to stir, but one look into the determined faces of the Americans told him how useless resistance would be, and muttering under his breath, he walked with them, out of the grounds and to where the battalion was resting.

As Desdenas had offered no resistance, and as no Filipino soldiers were in sight, the battalion marched back to the main body of MacArthur's column, and here the friar was turned over to the guard. Ben went to report to the general, who listened with interest to what the young officer had to say.

"I will have the prisoner sent to Manila," said General MacArthur.

"And what shall I do with the will?" asked Ben.

"You cannot return it to this Inez Garabella at present, for all communications with the rebels have been broken off. If you wish, I will send it to General Otis for safe keeping." And this was, later on, done.

The next two weeks brought hard and continuous work to Ben and the others attached to General MacArthur's column. It was decided by all the military leaders not only to get General Aguinaldo and his followers on the run, but to keep them running until practically exhausted, and consequently our soldiers were more or less on the go all the time. Following the taking of Malabacat by MacArthur, came a movement by Lawton in the direction of the Agno River, his cavalry taking the towns of Bongabong and Aliaga on the way. Lawton now commanded many of the mountain passes, and when MacArthur's column entered the Filipino capital at Tarlac, only to find it abandoned, Lawton captured a large number of bolomen, who were carrying Aguinaldo's baggage over the mountains, and also made prisoners of the Filipino President's private secretary and several of the staff officers. But what had become of Aguinaldo himself nobody could, or would, tell.

"He isn't going to allow himself to be captured," said Ben, after a hard day's fighting beyond Tarlac. "He's the slickest fellow to get away I ever heard of."

From Tarlac, the main body of MacArthur's column advanced along the railroad to Capas, only to find the rebels fleeing before them in all directions. The soldiers were allowed but little rest, and a few days later passed on through Gerona to Dagupan, the end of the railroad line. The railroad from end to end was now in the hands of the Americans, and transportation went on without further molestation.

In the meantime General Wheaton's expedition to Lingayen Gulf had been highly successful. His sailing from Manila had been kept a secret from all Filipino spies, who thought his soldiers were going to some of the other islands. The landing at San Fabian beach was accomplished without mishap, and the handful of insurgents near by quickly ran for shelter. The town was a mile off, and the march was through a swamp and over a rickety bridge, where the Americans received a first real volley from the enemy. But the insurgents would not stand for a battle at close range, and that night our troops occupied San Fabian without further resistance.

As but little was known of this section of Luzon, the command under General Wheaton had, necessarily, to move with caution, and on the second and third days after landing, scouting parties were sent forth in various directions. One of these parties moved toward San Jacinto, and had hardly gotten fairly started on the road when the Filipinos opened fire, killing six men in the front rank. A terrific battle, lasting well into the night, followed, the Filipino sharpshooters doing frightful execution, and bringing down, among numerous others, Major John A. Logan, one of the best beloved of the officers of the 33d United States Volunteer Infantry.

It was now learned that Aguinaldo was just beyond San Jacinto with the remnant of his army, and General Wheaton's column tried to push on faster than ever, toward the mountains on the north. But the passes were held by the very best of the Tagalog sharpshooters, and it is said that they had orders never to give up. San Jacinto was taken by the Americans, and then it was rumored that the town was to be surrounded, and General Wheaton prepared for an attack on a large scale. But this never materialized, and the flight of the Filipino President — he now proclaimed himself Dictator —

continued. On the 20th of November some of Wheaton's soldiers reached Dagupan, where they were joined by General MacArthur's column. Three days later MacArthur returned to Tarlac, where his command went into temporary camp.

It was not known till some days later how near the American troops had been to capturing Aguinaldo and his body-guard, nearly two thousand strong. Aguinaldo was making his way close to Lingayen Gulf when Wheaton landed there, and in his flight he came near falling into the hands of two of General Lawton's detachments — Swiger's and Young's cavalry. But he took directly to the mountains, throwing away all his superfluous baggage, and burying an amount of cash said to have been equal to seventy-five thousand dollars of our money. The darkness of night favored him, and for two days afterward it rained heavily, so that pursuit was much retarded. On several occasions his rear-guard was brought into action, and some of his carts and his native carriers were captured. One of the cart-drivers thus taken revealed the fact that the treasure had been buried and located the spot. In this mad flight, Aguinaldo's aged mother and one of his children became separated from the balance of the party, and

the child, aged four, was found and cared for by Wheaton's troops. Later on, the mother was also found, and placed in a convent for safe keeping until she could be taken to friends in Manila. In the meantime the youngest of Aguinaldo's children had died during the excitement and was hastily buried at Bayambang. Even though an enemy, General Aguinaldo, in his personal loss, received the warm sympathy of all the Americans.

In a work of this sort, written mainly to depict the life and adventures of our soldiers and sailors in the Philippines, it is manifestly impossible to go into the details of all the movements made to subdue the insurgents and to capture Aguinaldo and the other leaders. During the days to follow the occupation of Dagupan and other points in the north, in December, numerous expeditions were sent out to round up the badly scattered bands of the enemy. Some of these expeditions were highly successful, and many prisoners were taken and thousands of rounds of ammunition, stores, baggage, and artillery confiscated. From one point the Filipino leader fled to another, each time losing a portion of his following. Many of the private records of the enemy's organization fell into the hands of the

Americans, but some of these were afterward stolen, it was said by Tagalog spies. Not alone was the country searched for miles, and put under submission, but Subig Bay and other portions of the coast were garrisoned and the natives given to understand that they must offer no shelter or assistance to the rebels. Even the town of Laoag, in the extreme northwest, was visited by some American troops under Young, and here, after a short fight, the rebels were put to flight, and nearly two thousand Spanish prisoners — who had been held there ever since the war between the Spaniards and the Tagals — were released. These prisoners had, of course, heard all about the war between Spain and the United States, yet they readily hailed Uncle Sam's soldiers as their deliverers.

CHAPTER XXVII

BEN'S HUNT FOR WALTER

"CAPTAIN RUSSELL, here is news which will interest you!" cried Major Morris one day, as he rushed up to Ben, while the latter was cleaning his pistol and his sword.

"What is it, major?"

"Colonel Hare, after a chase of miles through the jungle, has succeeded in rescuing that party of sailors who were lost from the *Yorktown* last spring."

"That is certainly good news, major," was Ben's reply.

"But that is not all of it, captain. With the party were several other soldiers and sailors, and among them Si Doring, the young fellow who was lost with your brother Walter—"

Ben leaped forward anxiously. "Was Walter with them, too?"

"No, captain; his name isn't on the list. But this Si Doring may know something about him—"

"Of course he'll know something. Where can I find him?"

"They are over at a village called Cotes, I believe. The colonel gave me the news."

"I am going to see Doring at once — if I can get off. Want to go along?"

"Sorry, but I can't go. You know I am getting ready for my enlistment in the regulars now."

"That's so; I forgot. And Gilbert is getting ready too. Well, I'll be sorry to lose you, I can tell you that."

Without waiting to say more, Ben hurried to headquarters, and half an hour later had permission to visit Cotes, taking with him several men for protection, for the mountains still held Filipino sharpshooters where they were least expected.

Half an hour's hard walking brought him to the place where the rescued ones were resting. He readily singled out Si, and called the young sailor aside.

"You are Si Doring," he began, and as Si nodded, he continued, "I am Ben Russell!"

"Ben Russell!" gasped the young tar. "Say, now, I'm downright glad to know you, Ben — seems like I've known you a long while — through Walter." And a hearty handshake followed.

"But Walter — tell me of him, Doring."

"I can't tell you much. We went ashore together — you heard about that, I reckon."

"Yes! yes! He wasn't — wasn't — " Ben could get no farther.

"No, he wasn't killed by them heathenish natives. We both got away — by the skin of our teeth — and started to come over the mountains to Manila. We had a terrible rough time of it and were most dead when we fell in with these *Yorktown* prisoners. We helped some of 'em to escape, and in the darkness Walter and a sailor named Palmer got separated from me and the others. Then I was taken prisoner, and about a week later Palmer was recaptured. He said he had been with Walter and had left your brother in the bushes, with a bullet wound in his thigh."

"And did the Filipinos go back for Walter?"

"No; they were pushing on eastward as hard as they could, and they wouldn't listen to anything we said. Of course I didn't want to see Walter caught again, but I thought that would be better than to leave him alone when he was wounded."

"He must be dead!" groaned Ben, and could scarcely keep back the tears. Then he asked for

Palmer and had that sailor relate all that had happened while he and Walter were in each other's company.

"Do you know where he was left?" asked Ben, after the story was finished and he had had time to collect his thoughts.

"I did not at the time, but some time later I heard from one of the natives that we had been in the vicinity of a town called Biloguana."

"Biloguana!" ejaculated the young captain. "You are certain?"

"That's what the native told me. Do you know the place?"

"I know of it. A party I once met — a woman named Garabella — came from there. Were you in sight of the town?"

"If we were, I didn't see it. We were in the bushes, you know."

Palmer could tell nothing more, and Ben walked away with a heavy heart.

"I wish I could help you, Ben." It was Si, coming after him, who spoke. "And you haven't told me anything of Larry. Is he safe?"

"Yes. He is on board the *Charleston*, I think. I am expecting a letter from him any day."

"I don't know what I am going to do. I feel awfully lonely, now Walter is gone."

"Perhaps you had better apply for a position on the ship with Larry," answered Ben; and this Si did, when he was strong enough for active service. Larry hailed him as a brother, and soon made him feel perfectly at home.

Biloguana was forty-five miles away from the nearest American garrison, but determined to find out what had become of Walter at any cost, the young captain applied for permission to visit the town, taking with him his own company and a detachment under Gilbert Pennington. The proceedings were somewhat irregular, but Ben's record was first class, and General MacArthur gave the necessary consent.

General Lawton's command had been withdrawn to the vicinity of Manila, and the gallant commander himself had met death on the battlefield at San Mateo, on December 19, in the midst of a violent storm, and when the Filipino sharpshooters were out in force. Our troops were now scattered, holding many garrisons in Luzon and also isolated points in various other islands. Where Aguinaldo was nobody knew, but it was a fact that the death of his little child had been followed by the surrender of his beloved wife,

so that now the self-styled Dictator was left almost utterly alone in the world. Many of his best friends advised him to give up the struggle, but he refused as stubbornly as ever to listen to such advice.

"I will never bow to the will of the American people," he is reported to have said. "We are as much entitled to our independence as they are entitled to theirs." Unknown to many, he was now planning to shift the seat of war again to the Laguna de Bay and the south side of Manila.

The trip which Ben undertook was one full of hardships, for in many places the roads had been utterly destroyed and even the wells were rendered unfit for use. No serious opposition was encountered excepting at the village of Santa Rio, where a handful of natives fired on them from two nipa huts. The natives were quickly put to flight, and those who were afterward captured were compelled to become litter carriers over the mountains.

When Biloguana was reached, the news that the Americans were coming had already been circulated, and every hut and house was surmounted by its flag of white, as a sign of truce. Yet Ben brought the command up with caution, so as not to be taken off his guard.

On entering the town, the young captain at once set to work to learn if anything had been seen of Walter. At first he could obtain no information, but presently he met a native who directed him to the residence of Inez Garabella.

The woman saw him coming, and on recognizing him, ran swiftly toward him with hand outstretched.

"*Capitan* Russell, I am very glad to meet you again," she said, in her rich Spanish voice.

"And I am glad to see you, Señorita Garabella," he answered in his best Spanish, and with a low bow.

"I know why you have come to me," went on the lady, with a smile. "You have come to thank me for taking care of your brother Walter. But you must not thank me — it was so little to do after what you had done for me."

"I — I don't understand," stammered Ben. "Did you then take care of my brother?"

The Spanish lady looked bewildered in turn. "To be sure I took care of him, until he was quite well. Did he not join you at the American camp last week?"

"Join me? I have never seen him since he came on to the Philippines."

At this the lady of the house uttered a faint shriek. "And I was so sure Garmand would see him to a place of safety," she sobbed. "Ah, what have I done? What have I done?" And she wrung her hands.

It was a good quarter of an hour before she could make herself perfectly understood to the young captain, and then her story was to the effect that she had placed Walter in the care of a faithful old man named Garmand, who had said that he could easily get the young sailor through the mountains to the nearest American camp. The two had left the lady's home six nights previous.

"I have been expecting Garmand back each day," she continued. "What can have happened to both of them?"

"Either shot or captured!" groaned Ben, and he heaved a long sigh. "Oh, why didn't I try to get up here a week ago!"

He questioned Inez Garabella further, and learned that Walter had left her home in perfect health, although still somewhat weak from his wound and the fever which had followed. She could not tell exactly what course the young sailor and his guide had taken.

"It was good of you to take care of him," said Ben, later on. "He would have died on the hillside had you not done so." And then he added, "And now I have news for you," and told her about the capture of Friar Ponprè and the recovery of her father's will.

"It is wonderful!" she cried. "Wonderful!" And she came close to embracing him, but he backed out and shifted the subject.

As there was no use in hurrying back to the American lines, Ben and Gilbert, with the others, spent two days at Biloguana, much to the disgust of the natives generally. During this time they were entertained by Inez Garabella, who acted as if she could not do enough for them.

"She has an eye on you, Ben," said Gilbert, slyly. "Better beware."

"I am bullet proof, Gilbert," said the young captain, with a short laugh. "No Spanish beauty for me. An American girl will be good enough — if I ever think of getting married. Yet I cannot but admire her sincere friendship."

On the afternoon when the American soldiers were leaving the town, a native was brought in badly wounded. He proved to be the guide, Gar-

mand, and was at once taken to Inez Garabella's residence. When able to speak, he told how he had been attacked in the heart of the mountains by a small detachment of Filipinos under the leadership of a Spanish general.

"I was shot down, and the young sailor was made a prisoner," said the old guide, in his native tongue. "They took him to the southeastward."

This was translated to Ben, and he asked if the guide knew who was in charge of the party. He was much astonished to learn that the Spaniard had been General José Lupez.

"My old enemy!" cried Ben to Gilbert. "I wonder what he will do when he finds out that Walter is my brother?"

"I am afraid it won't help Walter any," responded the Southerner, sadly. "But brace up, Ben; we've found out that he is alive, and that's something. Perhaps he'll come out of this scrape with a whole skin, after all."

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN WHICH GILBERT AND MAJOR MORRIS DEPART FOR CHINA

THE early months of the new year passed slowly for both Ben and Larry. The young captain's command was kept in the vicinity of Tarlac, and he had but little to do excepting occasionally to aid in making the outlying rebels keep their distance.

The campaign around the Laguna de Bay was now again at its height, but it was not very much different from those which had gone before. Town after town were captured by the Americans, only to be, later on, abandoned for the want of sufficient soldiers with which to garrison them. In the meantime the civil commissioners got to work in and around Manila, and did what they could toward instructing the friendly Filipinos as to what was expected of them under American rule. This was up-hill work, for our institutions are vastly different from those of Spain, under which

these people had formerly lived, and, consequently, but slow progress was made.

The navy, meanwhile, was not altogether idle. Rear-Admiral Watson was now in command, and his ships did what they could toward keeping the Filipinos along shore in submission. Occasionally a gunboat would steam up a river or along one of the lakes and aid the army in its movements. The ships were also sent to the other islands, and this gave Larry and Si a chance to visit Mindanao, the next largest island to Luzon, and also Panay, one of the smaller of the group.

During the time spent by Ben at Tarlac a number of the volunteers were mustered out of the service. Among this number were Gilbert Pennington and Major Morris and the two old soldier chums, Carl Stummer and Dan Casey. Gilbert and the major at once reënlisted in the regular army service, and not long after Stummer and Casey followed. On the day that Gilbert and the major signed the muster-roll a recommendation for advancement was sent in by their superior, and not long after this the major was appointed acting commander of the first battalion of the regiment he had joined, with a commission as captain. Gilbert

received a commission as a first lieutenant. Both honors came as the result, so the papers stated, "of special bravery exhibited at the capture of the Filipino guerilla, General Pompoña Adoz." The regulars were quartered not far from where Ben's old regiment was stopping, yet the friends now saw but little of each other.

The retirement of Major Morris made a vacancy among the majors, and no one in the regiment was surprised when Ben became acting major of the third battalion, the other majors moving up to the first and the second battalions. Ben had reënlisted for six months, and in March his commission as a full-fledged major reached him.

"Major Russell, allow me to congratulate you," said Colonel Darcy, as he shook Ben warmly by the hand. "You deserve your promotion. I trust that some day you will go still higher in the ranks."

"Thank you, colonel, but the rank of major is quite high enough for me. Besides, I would not want to take your place from you — excepting you became a general."

"No, Major Russell, as long as I remain here, I wish to stay at the head of my own regiment."

"And I want to stay with our boys, too, colonel.

I can tell you candidly, it was quite a trial to give up Company D."

"I shall arrange it so that you can have your company in your battalion before long," returned the colonel; and there the conversation came to an end.

During all the weary time spent around Tarlac Ben heard nothing of Walter, nor of General José Lupez, although he closely questioned every Filipino brought into the lines. Once he heard of some American prisoners being kept at a place called Mount Ararat, but when the village was captured by our troops and the prisoners released, Walter was not among them, nor had any of the released ones heard of the young sailor.

"He must be dead," said Ben to Larry, when the latter took a run up to see him. "If he was alive, we would surely hear from him, one way or another."

Larry's face grew very sober. "Oh, Ben, I hope you are mistaken," he returned. "I cannot, cannot think of dear Walter as being dead!" And the tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his sunburnt cheeks.

Larry had come up from Manila, where he had

met his old friend, Captain Ponsberry, of the *Columbia*, the schooner in which the young tar had once sailed from Honolulu to Hong Kong.

"Captain Ponsberry says the natives along the coast are watching for every ship that comes in close, hoping to tackle her," said Larry.

"Is he here for a cargo?"

"No, he brought over some goods for an American firm — the Richmond Importing Company. From here he is going to sail for China, I believe. By the way, Ben, do you know that it looks as if there would be trouble in China before long?" went on Larry, after a pause. "Down in Manila I heard some talk about United States troops to be sent there."

"Well, I don't want to go, Larry. To tell the truth, I am getting tired of the army — now that regular battles seem to have come to an end."

"And I am just a bit tired of the navy. If we could find Walter and get that money José Lupez stole, I think I'd be for going home as soon as our present time is out."

"I don't care for the money as much as I did. If only we could find Walter, I would be satisfied. What does Si Doring think of the matter?"

"Oh, he is all cut up over it, and my old friends — Luke and the others — are awfully sorry on my account, too."

"If I could gain the slightest clew to his whereabouts, I would organize an expedition to rescue him," went on the newly appointed major.

"This José Lupez ought to be able to tell something about him."

"Yes, but where are you going to find the rascal? He seems to have disappeared utterly."

"Is his brother still in prison at Manila? I forgot to ask when I was down there."

"Yes."

"I wonder if he doesn't get any letters from his brother? I understand the two are alone in the world. I shouldn't think they would forget each other entirely."

"I hadn't thought of that, Larry. Perhaps it would pay to have this Benedicto Lupez watched closely. We might get some kind of a clew to work on. I know some of the prison authorities, and I'll drop them a line at once, and you can leave it at the prison when you go back. What have they done with Braxton Bogg?"

"Shipped him back to the United States for

trial. They say he is sure of ten or twenty years in State's prison."

"It will serve him right, and the Lupezes ought to get the same."

"I think so myself, although they may look at it in the light that all is fair in war," concluded Larry.

Larry returned to Manila that night, taking with him a note Ben had written for the prison authorities. The young tar was now on shore duty and would therefore be able to call at the prison for possible news every few days.

The next week was more busy for the young major than any had been since going into camp near Tarlac. The rebels to the northeastward became active again, and he had to take out his battalion as far as the village of Masalaño, where the soldiers experienced a running fight for two days through the jungles and swamps. A Filipino camp was broken up and considerable army stores gathered in. During the expedition it rained almost constantly, and the small streams to be crossed became veritable mountain torrents.

On his return to camp Ben was surprised to learn that Gilbert, Major Morris, and the regulars

to which the two belonged had struck camp and marched for Manila. "They are bound for China," said Colonel Darcy. "The Boxers in that country have started a revolution, or something like it, and some of Uncle Sam's men are wanted in Pekin and elsewhere to protect American interests."

"China!" cried the young major. "Who ever dreamed that Uncle Sam would send troops to that country!"

"Matters look mighty black there, major. I wouldn't be surprised if Major Morris and Lieutenant Gilbert see a whole lot of fighting before they come back."

"I am sorry I didn't see the major and Pennington, to bid them good-by."

"They were sorry, too. They may stay in Manila for a while, and if so, and things remain quiet here, you can run down and see them off." And so it was arranged. Ben went down to Manila as soon as he could get away, anxious not only to see his friends, but also to learn if Larry had received any word from the prison authorities.

"Nothing yet," said Larry, when the brothers met. "But one of the keepers, a man named Provost, is certain that Benedicto Lupez is up to

something out of the ordinary, and he is watching the rascal night and day."

In Manila they met Gilbert and Major Morris. Gilbert had some private matters to attend to — concerning the Richmond Importing Company — and had Larry take him to see Captain Nat Ponsberry.

"Yes, we are really off for China," said the young Southerner. "I must confess I didn't look for this when I enlisted in the regulars. But I must say I am not sorry." A few days later Gilbert Pennington was sailing away from Manila, in company with Major Morris, Carl Stummer, Dan Casey, and a number of others we have known in these pages. What the further adventures of these characters were will be found in another volume entitled, "On to Pekin; or, Old Glory in China." Ben was very sorry to lose his old chum, but wished not only Gilbert but likewise the others the best of good luck.

"They are going to carry the stars and stripes into a strange quarter of the globe," said the young major. "I trust none of them get killed or seriously wounded."

"Trust Gilbert to take care of himself," replied Larry. "I never met a fellow so plucky before."

Ben had an errand to Uncle Sam's tailor while at Manila, for his old uniform was worn out, and he must be measured for a new one, as befitted a newly appointed major. He took Larry with him to the building in which uniforms were stored, altered, and made, and soon had his errand over.

"We had something in the way of excitement here last night," said one of the tailors. "Some natives broke in and made off with about thirty suits."

"Didn't they catch the thieves?"

"They caught one of the fellows and recovered ten suits. But the other rascals got away, and twenty suits are still missing. It does beat the nation how those natives can do it, with so many of our soldiers around."

"You have no trace of those who got away?"

"No. They went off through a back alley, — the one that runs beside the prison, — and that was the last seen of them. The guard fired three shots, but they did no good," concluded the tailor. Then he turned to others who were waiting, and Ben and Larry walked away, little dreaming of how important to them was the news they had just heard.

CHAPTER XXIX

A STIRRING ADVENTURE IN MANILA

"WHAT do you suppose those thieves intend to do with the uniforms they stole?" said Larry, as he and Ben moved down a side street not far from the prison in which Benedicto Lupez was confined. "They can't sell them and they certainly won't dare to wear them."

"I think they'll dare to wear anything while in the Filipino encampments, Larry."

"But can they get through our lines with the goods?"

"I am afraid so. You know the pickets can't cover everything, on very dark nights, no matter how sharp they are."

"Well, it's a funny steal, to my mind. Can it be possible that some of the natives intend to disguise themselves as United States soldiers and carry out some plot against us?"

"That might be so. But it would be a ticklish job."

So the talk ran on until they reached a corner upon which stood one of the numerous saloons which had opened since the American occupancy of Manila. Above the saloon were living rooms, and happening to glance at one of the windows Ben saw a dark, frowning face peering down at him. The face looked strangely familiar, and Ben pointed excitedly with his hand.

"Look, Larry! Who is that?"

Larry turned to gaze up, and by this time the face and form had been withdrawn.

"I see nobody, Ben."

"It was Benedicto Lupez!"

"Impossible! Why, he is in prison. I saw him there only two days ago."

"If it wasn't Lupez, it was his double."

"Perhaps it was José Lupez."

"No; the brother looks different. I am pretty certain it was Benedicto. And he wore a United States uniform, too!" added the young major, suddenly.

Without waiting to say more, he ran to the side door of the house, to find it tightly locked. Then he went around to the front and entered the saloon. Larry came behind him.

The resort was a low-ceiled apartment, badly ventilated, and reeking from the smell of beer and tobacco. Why such places were permitted to exist was a mystery to Ben and to all others who went in for order and decency. Behind the dirty bar stood a tall, lean, and yellow-faced Westerner, probably a man who had been run out of some mining camp for the good of the community at large.

"I want to go upstairs," said Ben, shortly. "How can I get up?"

"Wanter go upstairs, stranger?" drawled the man, eying the young major sharply. "Wot fer, ef I may enquire?"

"I want to see the man who is in hiding up there."

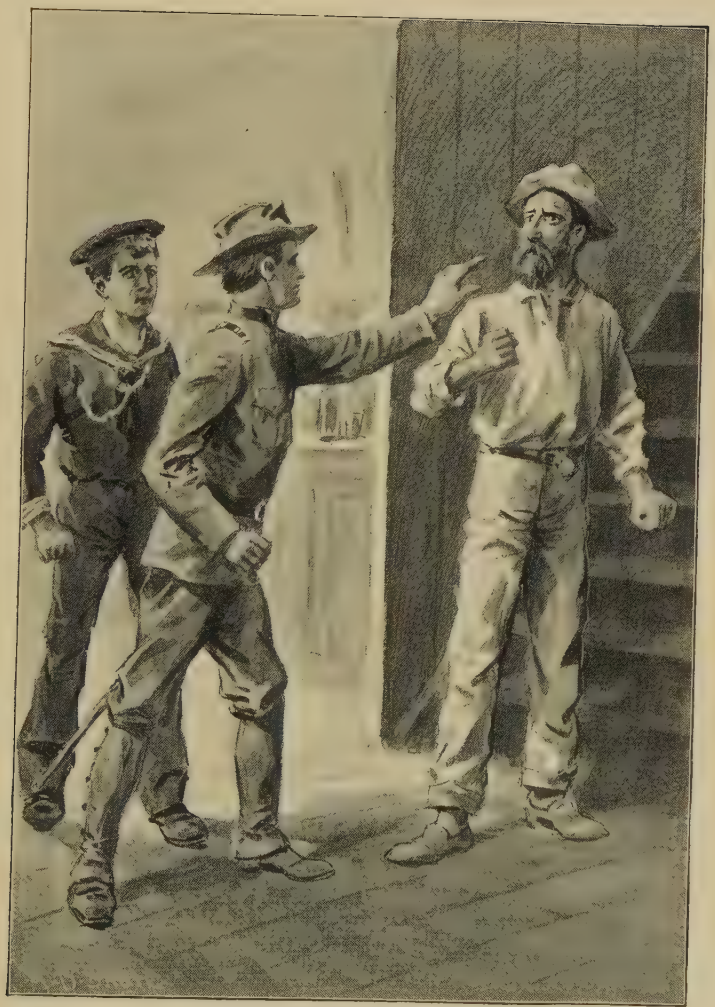
"Ain't no feller hidin' up thar, stranger. Must be some mistake."

"There is no mistake, and I shall go up," said Ben, quietly. "Come, Larry."

He started for the rear of the saloon, where there was a partly enclosed stairway leading upward. With a rush the keeper of the resort came from behind the bar and confronted him.

"Yer can't go up, an' thet settles it," he snarled.

Ben stepped back. "Do you know who I am?"



"I WON'T WASTE WORDS WITH YOU. STAND ASIDE" Page 289

he asked. "I am Major Russell, and I shall go upstairs, even if I have to call in a regiment to keep order."

"Well — er — this here — " stammered the Westerner.

"I won't waste words with you. Stand aside."

The keeper of the resort stood his ground for a second longer. Then a vision of arrest floated over his mind, coupled with a closing of his establishment, and he shifted uneasily to one side.

"It's a mistake, I tell ye, major. Ain't nobody up thar," he said; but Ben did not hear him, for the reason that he was already halfway up the stairs, with Larry at his heels.

As the brothers gained the second floor, they heard heavy footsteps in a rear hallway, followed by the slamming of a door. Then came a murmur of low voices.

"This way!" cried Ben, and hurried through the back hallway, which was semi-dark. Finding the right door, he attempted to open it, but found it barred from within.

"Open that door," he commanded. Scarcely had he spoken when there was the crack of a pistol, and a bullet came through the door panel within six

inches of his head. The discharge of the weapon was followed by more hasty footsteps and the slamming of a heavy wooden shutter.

"Oh, Ben, are you hit?" The cry came from Larry, and he clutched his brother by the arm.

"No," was the answer. "Run down and summon assistance. Be quick, or the man will get away!"

As Larry departed, leaping down the stairs three steps at a time, Ben stepped back and then hurled his whole weight against the door. It was a frail structure, and went down with a crash, sending the splinters in all directions. Pistol in hand, he leaped into the apartment, only to find it empty of human occupants. But on the floor rested several bundles, all containing uniforms — a portion of the lot stolen from the government storehouse.

The wooden shutter opened out upon a rear addition to the building proper — a sort of kitchen and restaurant combined. The roof sloped greatly, so that the back end was less than eight feet from the ground. As the young major peeped out he was in time to see two men leap from the addition into a narrow yard below. Both wore the uniforms of American regulars, but both were undoubtedly Spaniards.

"Stop!" cried the young officer, and leaping out on the roof of the addition, he took aim at the leading fugitive and fired. His aim was a good one, and the man went down with a groan, shot in the knee. Then the young major turned his attention to the second man, but that individual disappeared around the corner of another building, running with might and main to get out of range.

By this time the excitement in the street in front of the saloon was great, and it was an easy matter for Larry to obtain assistance. Several soldiers who happened to be at hand ran to the rear of the resort with him, and here Ben joined the party. The wounded man was left in care of one of the soldiers, and Ben showed the others the direction the second rascal had taken. But though the party hunted around for the best part of the day, no further trace of the man could be found.

On returning to the wounded one, it was found that he was a Spaniard named Marbon, who had been locked up in the prison with Benedicto Lupez. Both Lupez and Marbon had slipped away from the prison the night before, and, joined by two native sympathizers, had broken into the government storehouse and stolen the uniforms, — the natives taking the

bulk of the goods, and Marbon and Lupez going in only to get suits with which to disguise themselves.

The natives had disappeared, leaving the uniforms where Ben had found them. These uniforms were afterward returned to the government, and General MacArthur, who was now in authority at Manila, ordered the saloon closed up, and the proprietor put under bonds pending a further investigation. In the end the Westerner was found guilty of aiding the enemy and sent to prison.

Marbon seemed to be rather a good fellow, and Ben felt sorry for him and saw to it that the Spaniard was given every comfort. In return for this Marbon one day said he would like to speak to the young major in private.

"I wish to tell you about Benedicto Lupez," said the Spaniard, when the two were alone. "He pretended to be my friend, but now I am sure he was more of an enemy to me. He used me only in order to help himself to escape."

Marbon then told what he knew of Benedicto Lupez's plans. He said that the two brothers, Benedicto and José, had planned to meet at a village called Neritas, on the main road to Batangas, a town on the south coast of Luzon. When they got to

Batangas, they were to board a small native ship and sail for Panay, another of the islands, where both felt they would be free from molestation, no matter what happened to the rebel cause in Luzon.

"José is afraid that the Filipino cause is lost," said Marbon. "He says he was a fool to buy a generalship in the army."

"Has he the money which was stolen by his brother?" questioned Ben, with deep interest.

"Benedicto said he had something like thirty-five thousand dollars in American money. The rest was spent."

"How did Benedicto and you hear from this José Lupez?"

"Through a native — one of the men who helped to steal the uniforms."

"Was it this native who helped you to escape from the prison?"

"Yes. He gave the keepers cigars which were heavily drugged and which made them stupid for hours. It was a clever scheme."

"Where do you think Benedicto Lupez is now?"

"Undoubtedly on his way to Neritas — if he can steal his way through the American lines."

"One thing more. Did you hear Benedicto Lupez

say anything of my brother, Walter Russell, who was once the captive of José Lupez?"

"Yes, yes! He had a letter from José, and in that José said the sailor boy was still in his power. He told Benedicto that he would keep the sailor boy a prisoner, and if Benedicto got into a bad corner, to call upon you, and get you to help him — or else the sailor boy would be tortured and killed."

"The wretch!" burst out the young major, and could not help but shiver; "I see through his plot. Perhaps he thought that at some time he could bribe me, through Walter, to aid Benedicto to escape from the American authorities."

"That is the point, Señor Russell; he is a deep one, trust my word for it."

A look of bitterness crossed Ben's face. "If this is true, it will go hard with my brother, now Benedicto Lupez is free. I should not be surprised if my brother was killed when the two Lupezes get together — they are so down on all of us." He paused for a moment. "How far is Neritas from here?"

This question Marbon could not answer, but the young major learned from others that the village was thirty miles to the southeast of Manila. For two-thirds of this distance the country was clear of insur-

gents, — but what was beyond nobody seemed to know.

Determined to act, and that quickly, the young officer interviewed his colonel, and both went to see General MacArthur. A private conversation lasting almost quarter of an hour ensued, and at the conclusion Ben was given permission to take his battalion from Tarlac, bring them to Manila, and then turn to the southeast and push on through Cavité Province and Neritas, in an endeavor to rescue Walter and bring Benedicto and José Lupez to swift justice.

CHAPTER XXX

LAST BATTLE WITH THE INSURGENTS — CONCLUSION

"We must find and rescue Walter, no matter at what cost."

Such were Ben Russell's words to his brother Larry, when the battalion set out from Manila, after only a two hours' rest at the capital. The young major had lost not a minute in bringing his men down from Tarlac, and he had made an address to them which had aroused them as never before.

"We'll follow you anywhere, Major Russell," said one of the oldest privates. "Just you show us what you want, that's all."

Larry had obtained permission to accompany his brother, and the two pushed on side by side. With the battalion went four native carts, piled high with stores, for there was no telling how long the command would be away from a base of supplies. General MacArthur had considered the enterprise somewhat foolhardy, and had warned Ben of the risk to be run.

"Be careful," had been his parting words. "Re-

member, we cannot afford to lose too many officers and men. You have a good record to your credit — do not spoil it;" and Ben had promised to advance with all caution. Yet he was ready to "stick his head into the lion's mouth," as the saying is, if only Walter could be rescued by the movement.

During the first two days on the road but little out of the ordinary happened. They passed through a dozen villages, some deserted and some occupied by American troops and friendly natives. The weather was hot and muggy and the greatest suffering was on account of the atmospheric conditions.

At their last stopping place, Vobaña, they heard that the regulars two miles to the westward had had a brush with the rebels two days before, in which half a dozen on each side were wounded. It was reported that the Filipinos had fled southward.

"We'll soon catch up to them," said the young major, and he was right. They came upon the rear guard of the Filipinos the next morning at ten o'clock, and a short engagement ensued during which three Tagals were wounded and one killed. The rest of the band left the highway and took to the mountains, and the major did not undertake to follow them.

Late that afternoon the battalion reached Neritas, to find part of the village in flames. The rebels had left the place two hours before, after a bitter quarrel with some of the inhabitants, who were inclined to accept American rule. The principal dwellings of the town had been ransacked and everything of value carted off. In justice to Aguinaldo it must be said that the Filipino Dictator, later on, disclaimed all knowledge of this looting, and insisted that it had been done by guerillas without authority from any one. The flames could not be extinguished easily, and one-third of Neritas was consumed before the fire died out.

The chief man in the town was a highly educated Tagal who had but recently been to Manila for instructions in civic government — according to American ideas. He greeted Ben warmly and said he would give the troops all the assistance in his power.

"The rebels were under the leadership of Captain Relosus, of the sharpshooters —" he began.

"Captain Relosus — my old enemy — the rascal who once tried to burn Manila!" burst out the young major. "I owe him a good deal."

"Yes, it was this same Relosus who aided in the

Manila conspiracy. He is a very bad man — he robbed my house of a good deal."

"And who else were in the party?"

"A Spaniard named José Lupez, who came up from the lake to meet his brother, a fugitive from the capital."

"And did he meet his brother?"

"I believe he did. At least, I saw him with another Spaniard, and the two looked somewhat alike."

"It was undoubtedly Benedicto Lupez. Did the rebels have a prisoner with them, a young American sailor?"

"I saw no prisoners. We had a great dispute, which ended in a fight. Then our homes were robbed and set on fire, and the rascals departed in all haste on the road to Batangas."

"How many were there in the party?"

"About a hundred came first. Just before the others left, over a hundred more came up."

"And they marched on the highway?"

"Yes."

Ben said no more, but with all speed gathered his battalion together, and in a few minutes more the soldiers were on the highway in pursuit of the

guerillas, for such these rebels must properly be called. The men were tired out, but Ben urged them on, and they were willing to do almost anything for him.

It was a clear starlit night, and the highway was a fairly good one, although here and there were marshy places. Ben kept at the head of his command, with Larry beside him, and scarcely a word was spoken. All felt that a time of importance was not far off.

The time came shortly after midnight. A turn of the road had brought them in sight of a guerilla camp, and scarcely was the place discovered when several rifle shots rang out, and two of the Americans fell back wounded.

"We are on them, boys!" shouted the young major. "Give it to them now! Make every shot tell!"

It is doubtful if his command was heard, for the Americans were already firing, pouring volley after volley into the guerillas, who had been taken by surprise. The enemy, however, occupied ground which was a trifle higher than the roadway, and this was to their advantage.

Ben and Larry were to the front in the attack,

and both fired their weapons as often as did anybody. The light was uncertain, and it was largely a go-as-you-please encounter. The cracking of rifles was incessant, and presently hand-to-hand encounters became numerous.

Ben's eyes were wide open for a sight of José Lupez, and before long he saw both José and Benedicto sneaking behind some trees, in an endeavor to get out of the encounter entirely.

"See, there they go!" cried the young major. "They are trying to escape. Come, Larry!" And away he sped, with Larry at his side and a dozen from the ranks following. A number of shots whistled around the Americans, and Ben was grazed in the side. Then our friends let drive several times in rapid succession, and Benedicto Lupez was seen to pitch over on his side. He had been struck in the heart and was dead before the others reached him.

But José Lupez kept on, and now he was joined by several others, including Captain Relosus. The Filipino sharpshooter was aware that the fight was going against his side, and was willing to do anything to save himself from being shot down or captured.

"They are going to get away if they can!" ex-

claimed Larry, as the fleeing party turned toward a jungle, up a hillside. "We can never stir them out of that in this darkness."

"They must not escape, Larry," came from Ben. And he added in a whisper, "Remember poor Walter."

On they went with renewed energy, and now Captain Relosus came again into view. Turning, he fired point blank at Larry, and the young sailor received a bad nip in the forearm. Crack! went Ben's pistol, and the sharpshooter staggered but did not fall. He cried to his men to aid him, but nobody paid any attention. Several of the American soldiers ran to him, but he tried to wave them away.

"Mercy!" he screamed. "Mercy! I surrender!" Scarcely had the words passed his lips than a shot came from the jungle, striking directly through his neck. The bullet was fired by one of the captain's own followers, and was meant for an American soldier standing behind the rebel. The noted guerilla did not die on the spot, but breathed his last on the evening of the next day.

Finding they could not hide in the jungle, José Lupez, with only a handful of followers, took a semicircular course behind some rocks, re-crossed

the road, and began to wade a deep stream running to the eastward. But the watercourse was a treacherous one, and in the very centre the Spaniard got stuck, and found it impossible to budge himself.

"Hi! help me!" he roared in Spanish, but nobody paid attention to him, and his voice soon guided Ben, Larry, and several privates to the spot. In the meantime, the other rebels continued to run and were soon out of hearing.

"Surrender!" cried Ben, as soon as he saw José Lupez. "Surrender, or we will kill you."

"I surrendor! I surrendor!" wailed the badly frightened Spaniard, and shaking in every limb he threw his pistols to the shore. He was told to follow, but soon convinced Ben that he was indeed stuck. Then a rope was procured, and he was hauled out of the river bed more dead than alive.

By this time the attack on the camp had come to an end, the rebels flying in all directions. All their stores and the things which they had stolen were left behind, and Ben's command took charge of everything. It was the last seen of the insurgents in that neighborhood for a long while to come.

When first questioned about Walter, José Lupez refused to say a word. But Ben was now in no humor

for trifling, and he sternly told the Spaniard he must confess or it would be the worse for him, and at the same time drew his pistol. The sight of the weapon had the desired effect, and Lupez fell upon his knees, begging for mercy. "No shoot!" he cried in Spanish. "I will confess. I have not harmed your brother. He is at Canas, at the house of one Pedro Borillo. Go there, and you will find him safe."

"And where is the money you stole?"

"At Canas, too, in a tin box I left with Pedro Borillo."

This ended the talk, and early in the morning Ben and Larry, with a picked guard of thirty soldiers, hurried to the town of Canas, three miles distant. They found the place in a flutter, for the inhabitants had heard of the encounter on the road, and white flags were everywhere in evidence.

"I wish to visit the house of Pedro Borillo," said Ben, to the first natives he met, and they readily showed him to the place, a pretty cottage set in a wilderness of tropical flowers. Their coming filled a very old Filipino woman with great alarm. She could not speak English, nor even straight Spanish, and so they pushed their way into the cottage without stopping to talk to her. Inside, they saw an old man, doubled

up with rheumatism, sitting on a bed in a corner. This was Pedro Borillo, and he was even more alarmed than the old woman had been.

"Yes! yes! José Lupez brought the young sailor here," he said in Spanish. "I know not why he did it. But he told me it was all right. I trust I have not done wrong. He said —"

A stamping on the floor overhead interrupted the man's speech, and seeing a ladder in the corner of the room, Ben ran for it. But Larry was ahead of him, and both scrambled up like mad.

"Walter!"

"Ben and Larry! I thought I recognized your voices. Thank God you have come!" And then Walter, thin, pale, and scarcely strong enough to stand upright, threw himself first into Ben's arms and then into Larry's. It was a moment of supreme joy and one long to be remembered.

"I was afraid I should never be rescued," said Walter, when he felt like talking. "And I was so miserable that more than once I almost wished I was dead. I have been in José Lupez's clutches ever since I was caught in the mountains by him and his guard. I tried to escape a dozen times, but they watched me too closely."

Walter's hands were tied behind him, and he was also tied to a ring in the floor by a rope passed around his left ankle. He said, however, that the Borillos had treated him quite fairly, much better than had the soldiers under Lupez.

Taking their brother below, Ben and Larry saw to it that he was given every attention which he needed, and then the young major asked about the tin box Lupez had mentioned. Not daring to keep it, Pedro Borillo brought it up from a hole under the cottage floor, and it was found to contain thirty-five thousand dollars in American and Spanish money, besides a number of private papers belonging to José Lupez.

"For once the rascal spoke the truth," said Larry.

"Because I scared it out of him," answered Ben, with a short laugh. He was more light-hearted than he had been since coming to the Philippines.

The soldiers rested at Canas for twenty-four hours and then marched to join the rest of the battalion. A native cart was called into service for Walter, and in this he was taken to Negritas, where the battalion rested for a week. When the command got back to Manila, Walter was taken to the hospital for rest, while José Lupez and several other prisoners were put where they deserved to be — behind the bars.

The money which had been recovered was placed in the hands of the authorities, for safe keeping until called for by the officers of the Hearthstone Saving Institution of Buffalo.

It was a happy little gathering at the hospital on the following Sunday evening, — Walter in an easy-chair, with Ben on one side of him and Larry on the other, and each holding a hand of the invalid.

"I can tell you, it's mighty good to be together once more," said Larry. "I must say, I trust we are never to be separated again."

At this Walter smiled faintly. "You forget, I haven't done anything out here yet for Uncle Sam."

"And I don't think you'll be called on to do anything," put in Ben. "This war is practically over, and unless something new turns up, I'm going home when my time runs out."

"And I'm going home, too," added Larry. And then, giving Walter's hand a tight squeeze, he added: "You must go with us, Walter. For the present I think the Russell brothers have done enough for the honor of Old Glory."

A few words more, and we shall bring to a close this tale of war adventure in the Philippines.

As Ben said, the war was now practically over. According to General MacArthur's report, the insurgents were badly scattered in all directions, while the larger portion of their leaders were either under arrest or had become friendly to the United States. At Manila and other large cities business was picking up rapidly, and the American authorities were doing all in their power to restore order, open up the courts and schools, and bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion. The fighting still in progress belonged merely to a sort of guerilla warfare which was likely to continue, especially in mountainous territories, for years.

Ben's successful expedition to Negritas and Canas won for him additional praise from his superiors, and it was whispered about that he would soon be listed for a colonelcy. But this was a distinction he did not desire, and he frankly said so. "I am done with the army — at least for the present," he told his friends. "All I wish is my honorable discharge when my time is up." And this he obtained without trouble, although everybody, from the general down, was sorry to have him leave.

"We'll never fill your place, Major Russell," said Colonel Darcy. "And if you ever think of com-

ing back, remember we'll welcome you with open arms."

Larry had still some months to serve in the navy, the most of which time he put in on the *Charleston*, in company with Si Doring, Luke Striker, and several of his other friends. Larry and Si had already become great chums, and when Walter joined them, the three, along with faithful old Luke, became all but inseparable.

The two final months of Ben's term in the army were spent in and around Manila, and during that time several things of more or less importance happened. José Lupez was tried by the local authorities and sentenced to several years in prison on various charges. Barnabas Moval was also tried for his misdeeds, but while awaiting sentence he endeavored to escape from jail and was mortally shot by a guard. The friar, Ponprè, was held for many months. He had influential friends, especially in the Philippine church, and through them obtained his release, under promise to leave Luzon forever.

The trial of Barnabas Moval brought Inez Garabella to Manila. She was still very grateful to Ben for what the young major had done for her, and said her care of Walter during the young sailor's sickness

did not repay her debt to him. Before she went away she presented the young major with an elegant diamond scarfpin, which Ben wears to this day and of which he is properly proud. She said that as soon as the war was at an end she intended to open up the mines left by her father, forming a stock company, after American ideas. "And I shall present all of you Russells with shares," she concluded.

Although kept fairly busy, Ben did not forget poor Lieutenant Gilmore, and frequently visited the officer, who was in a hospital at Corregidor Island —a place set apart especially for convalescents. Gilmore was doing as well as could be expected, and he went back to the regiment on the day that the young major left the service. He is now captain of Company D, and with him are several others of our old friends, who had been wounded but who recovered sooner or later.

During those days spent in the capital of Luzon, Ben received letters from Gilbert and Major Morris, which pleased him greatly. The American troops had joined what was called the International Army, or Allies, and after many fights with the Boxers and rebellious Chinese government soldiers, had forced their way to Pekin, rescued the Americans and others

who were in peril there, and brought the Chinese to treat for peace. "I don't know how long we are to remain here," wrote Gilbert. "But as long as we do stay you can rest assured we'll see to it that Old Glory is properly respected." He added that his own personal affairs were going along swimmingly, and that he was tremendously glad to hear that Walter had been rescued.

It was not long after this that a letter came from Job Dowling, who had read in the newspapers of the rescue of Walter and the capture of José Lupez. The old man was overjoyed to think his nephew safe and equally joyful that the most of the bank money had been recovered. "When I read the news I thought I was dreaming," so his communication ran. "I bought four papers to get the news straight. It seems most too good to be true. The bank folks say they can now get together and pay all depositors in full, so you boys are sure of close on to twenty thousand dollars, besides the thousand Ben gets for capturing Braxton Bogg. All the town is talking about your doings, and you'll get a right royal send-off when you return — and I'm a-going to be at the head of the procession, too, and give you such a welcome as you never dreamed on. You are a

credit to your country, and your uncle is proud of you."

"Hurrah for Uncle Job!" cried Larry, when he read the letter. "He isn't the crabbed old stick he used to be, but just the dearest old fellow ever was!" And Walter and Ben agreed with him. After such a letter their united home-going was something to look forward to with fresh pleasure.

And here let us shake each of the Russell boys by the hand and bid them all good-by. It may be that the future still holds additional adventures for them, yet it is doubtful if any will be more thrilling than those which they experienced, both in Cuba and in the Philippines, while fighting for the honor of OLD GLORY.

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